THE KINGDOM IN THE CRADLE

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THE KINGDOM

IN

THE CRADLE

BY

JAMES ATKINS, A.M., D.D.

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I. BY WAY OF SUGGESTION.



BY WAY OF SUGGESTION.

THOUGHTFUL men in surveying the present position of Christianity in its hold upon the world are questioning, some reverently and some otherwise, why it is that it has thus far failed to bring the race under its dominion. Is this failure due to a lack of power in the scheme itself? Or is it due to misapprehensions and consequent false policies of propagation on the part of those who have been charged with its promulgation? The former view involves a position of serious unbelief, while the latter does nothing more than open up a field of most interesting and wholesome inquiry touching the human agencies involved in the establishment of the kingdom of God among men, and the laws by which such a kingdom must come. That the slowness of the progress of Christianity and its lapses are wholly chargeable to its human instruments, and in no wise to the scheme itself, becomes constantly clearer as each generation throws the light of its experience on this field of study.

When the antagonisms which Christianity has had to encounter are considered, its achievements are truly wonderful. But they are even more so when we add to this external opposition the frequent failure of its adherents to regard the spirit which it breathes, and also certain laws, which are, according to the views of our day, fundamental to its existence and growth.

A larger progress has been barred by a number of what seem to be fundamental misconceptions, and such as are duly guarded against in the teaching of Jesus. One of these is the assumption that the chief aim of the gospel is to save men in a world to come; to make them ready for some "far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves." No such view is to be derived from the teaching of Jesus. He clearly taught that it was to save man in this life. He taught that a man who is not saved in and for this world in all his relations is not

saved in any world, and that he who is thus saved is saved for all worlds. The doctrine of a heavenly salvation which contains so comforting a truth has been allowed to discount, if not to substitute, the doctrine of the earthly salvation. It happens on this account that men are much perturbed over the question as to whether or not they will be saved in heaven, hereafter; when the all-important question is, whether they are saved here and now. This too ready adjournment of the question of salvation out of this world into a world which is yet to come has worked untold detriment to the kingdom of God among men.

A kindred misconception is that the Son of Man came to save men from things rather than to things. He came to save his people from their sins, it is true; but this is only the great initiatory. And even the common interpretation of this statement as indicating that the supreme purpose was to save an adult generation of sinners, either that one to which he came in person or any other, is far from its

broadest import. To save one from his sins is a vastly more significant work than to save one out of his sins. This latter Christ does in many cases, in all, indeed, where the transgressor of any age or degree of guilt fulfills the conditions. The brand plucked from the burning is a sublime fact; the life saved throughout from the devastating influences of sin is unspeakably greater. Jesus came to save his people from their sins ab initio in order that he might save them to all that at which the divine wisdom and goodness had aimed in their creation. The forgiveness of sins is the beginning of salvation, not the end of it.

Closely allied with this error is another which has exerted a very large influence upon the thought and policies of the Church, namely, that when a man sinful in habit through many years has been converted he is saved in the largest sense. This view is so far from the truth as discernible in religious experience that it seems strange so many good and laborious men should have held it. Nevertheless, it has given rise to a violent and consequently somewhat spasmodic

evangelism which has done much toward confirming the thought of the Church in an inadequate notion as to the real extent of God's purpose and power to save the world, and consequently as to the only sure method of doing it.

It may at first sight seem harsh to say that a plan of evangelism that confirms each generation in the view that a converted adult is saved in the largest and best sense, and that this is the chief work of the Church, is to that extent a pernicious evangelism. Yet this is true, despite the fact that in the lapse of a higher and broader good much special, narrow good has been thereby accomplished. It is not intimated in this that evangelism aimed at adults should be abandoned or intermitted. Rightly used it is a valuable part of the great process of soul-winning, just as gleaning was under the old agricultural order a part of harvesting. It has, and must continue to have, a very important place in the saving of men. Nothing, however, has been more abused in its use. A too exclusive reliance upon it has brought incalculable disaster, and must continue

to do so as long as that reliance lasts. This applies as well to a settled or pastoral evangelism as to that which goes at large. In so far as either leads men to depend supremely upon that order of work for the conversion or shepherding of the multitudes, it stands in the way of a more rational, scriptural, and efficient plan for the saving of the race.

If it be argued that Christ and his apostles addressed themselves chiefly to the mature among men, and sought the conversion of the grown-up multitudes, a sufficient answer is not hard to find. They were laying the foundations of the kingdom by proclaiming the truth. They had no access with such a ministry to the children of the day. The truths which they taught could not be committed to children directly or at first hand. It was in this case as in the giving of the law through Moses. That law was committed to one grown-up generation, but never to another. Those who received it were bound by it to teach it diligently unto their children. The noise and quaking of Sinai

were succeeded by the quiet and sweetness of the family school of religion. In the case of the first generation the law was planted in the ear, in the second it was sown in the heart. So it was with the work of our Lord and his disciples. Moreover, those labors, matchless as they were, and reënforced by an affluent power of miracle, failed to touch that generation further than to find here and there a place for planting the seed of the kingdom which was to be. When Jesus said over and over again to the best of his hearers, "O! slow of heart to believe," he was uttering a general truth, or one applicable alike to all grown-up people who for the first time undertake to give serious consideration to spiritual truth. There are thousands of children in Christendom to-day of comparatively tender years who know more of the plan of salvation both vitally and theoretically than Peter seems to have known at the time of his second call by the shores of Galilee.

Every great evangelistic movement since the apostolic age has brought the same conviction,

namely, that it is impossible for all the evangelizing agencies of any given time to reach and transform any considerable part of that generation. It is perfectly clear that if the race is to be saved it must be brought about on the economic side by the outgrowing power of Christianity, and that this power cannot be expressed through even the mightiest agencies of adult evangelization.

The one hope in the case has its foundations in an awful fact, and that fact is that three times in each century nature sweeps the earth clear of its inhabitants and brings new ones into their place. The writer has a neighbor still living (one hundred and nine years of age), since whose birth four billions of people have died and a greater number have been born. Along with this stands the fact that Christianity at the end of two thousand years has a nominal population not exceeding five hundred millions, or less than one-third of the world's inhabitants. At the same rate of progress it may be expected that the race will become nominally Christian about the year 6000 A.D.; provided no allowance be

made for the fact that Christianity is just now for the first time since the apostolic age coming into serious contact with the hoary superstitions of the most populous and conservative nations of mankind; and provided further that no lapses such as have occurred in the past shall occur in the future. Even in the saying of this we cannot but remember that the day of Constantine was immediately followed by the revival of paganism, and that the death of Charlemagne, which marked the culmination of another period of aggressive Church history, was the beginning of the Dark Ages.

We live in a day of world-policies. The common man talks in terms of nations and civilizations; of reciprocities, diplomacies, alliances, and the like. And these are no mere dreams or empty idealizations. They are the household concerns of the family of nations. They affect the actual lives of men. The small merchant and the insignificant consumer are made to feel the effects of national and international conditions of commerce. They feel the chill of vast busi-

ness movements, and even political movements, in atmospheres remote from their own.

There is also a growing sense of world-fellowship. Not only has patriotism become large and intelligent, and broadened without becoming shallow, but there has come to be a copatriotism as between the citizens of different nations. This sentiment working in conjunction with the broadened commerce has produced a sort of coparcenary interest in national affairs which in more than one instance of late has exerted a direct and controlling influence upon national movements.

These generalizations did not come about by mere individual suggestion to the masses. They are the products of long processes, the growth of centuries. As all sums total depend upon the included units, so likewise all civilizations but measure the included individual life. The social unit proper is the family. No man who is fully such liveth to himself. The normal man is the family man. The ethics of the crowd is at last the ethics of the family, not directly,

that is, by a mere process of addition, but nevertheless truly. The process by which the ethics of the multitude is derived from the ethics of the family resembles more a chemical process, which, be it noted, is none the less definite because more complex. It follows hence that the study and right direction of the household life of any nation is its richest and most available field of true and effective statesmanship.

One of the most vital questions before the Church of our day is whether the citizenship of the kingdom shall be chiefly reared within or captured from without; or, as two able writers have stated it, whether the working policy of the Church shall be predominantly one of nurture, or of rupture; of evolution, or revolution. If we prefer a similitude from the vegetable world from which Jesus drew so freely in his parables of the kingdom, we may say that the question is really one of transplantation, or of growth from the seed.

¹Dr. Bushnell. ² Rev. James Chapman.



II. A VIEW OF THE KINGDOM.



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A VIEW OF THE KINGDOM.

It is my purpose to consider in this chapter that parable of our Lord in which above all others he sets forth the power by which his kingdom shall come, and which involves necessarily certain processes to be regarded by the Church in its part of the work. But before doing so, it is needful to make and answer an inquiry as to what is meant by the establishment of the kingdom of heaven among men.

Was it Christ's purpose that the kingdom he came to build should when complete consist of an elective citizenship, gathered here and there throughout the earth and throughout the ages; a few comparatively, brought together, and into fellowship with him on the terms of repentance and faith, and by a divine nurture fitted for a place in the heavenly kingdom? Was it his notion, in other words, to select out of the earth the

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constituency of a kingdom which he is building not here but elsewhere? Or, was it his intention to found an enduring empire of righteousness among men, a true theocracy with the race of mankind as its subjects?

That the former view has furnished the working theory of the Church hitherto, can scarcely be questioned. This is evidenced by what the Church has done and by what it has left undone. It is visible in its terms and in its systems of evangelism. It has, indeed, permeated the thought of mankind to such an extent as to have almost preoccupied the ground against any view which does not make the real kingdom to be the one among angels rather than the one among men.

This view I deem to be wholly out of harmony with Christ's doctrine. That such an elective kingdom has existed as only a partial realization of Christ's ideal, is not denied; but the question about which we are concerned is not what must be looked upon at any given time as the kingdom of God in the world, but rather, what is Christ's

doctrine as to the ideal and ultimate kingdom of God among men.

It will readily be granted that a right view of this question must take into account the nature of God as the Father of all, the power and resources of Christ as the Master of his kingdom, the field of need in the sinful nature of man, and the divine glory as the final outcome of this kingdom. With these elements in view, it is scarcely possible to stop short of the conclusion that this kingdom is to be commensurate with the race, not only in geographic extent but in all other dimensions. Christ was revealed "to destroy the works of the devil,"1 to "put all things in subjection under his feet,"2 to draw all men unto himself.3 "He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found." The kingdom of God when fully established is to comprehend every possible interest of humanity, and the race itself is to be divinely informed, a temple inhabited of God. If it be said this is a long and diffi-

¹ I John iii. 8. ² Heb. ii. 8. ³ John xii. 32.

cult undertaking, I reply that a long and difficult undertaking is worthy of all the agencies involved in it when the immortal destinies of a race and the divine glory are bound together in the issue.

It is easy to see that the processes called for in the establishment of a kingdom according to the first view will necessarily differ widely from those demanded by the second.

Jesus is, of course, the only authority on themes of this class. When we turn to his teachings to find out how this kingdom shall come, which is the great question about which we are concerned, we find but one doctrine, the doctrine of growth. It is notable that all the parables which set forth the progress of the kingdom, either in its individual existence in the heart of a believer, or as a kingdom taken collectively, are parables of growth. This will include the parable of the leaven, the action of which is also a form of growth.

Chief among the parables of the kingdom is the one which is commonly called the parable of the seed growing gradually. It has been, and still is, a much-neglected parable by both commentators and preachers. It is recorded by Mark only. In this parable Jesus says: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

A little examination will show that this parable is broad enough to embrace most of what is contained in the others, and to add an original notion of the largest significance.

The parable of the sower has to do primarily with the varieties of soil and certain incidents of growth. That of the tares sets forth the relation of the good growths and the bad growths within the kingdom-field; that of the mustard

¹ Mark iv. 26-29.

seed, the large development out of small beginnings; and that of the leaven, the progressive nature of the kingdom in all the circles in which it is placed.

The parable of the growing seed easily embraces the parable of the sower in terms of "a man" who cast the "seed," and of "the ground" in which it was sown. There is here ample room for all items touching the varieties of soil and the incidents of growth. It likewise states in detail the germinal and expansive power of the seed as taught in the mustard seed, and it clearly involves the growth of tares along with the wheat if sown with it; or instead of it, if sown instead of it.

This parable is in a good sense in a category of its own; it is absolutely generic in its scope. It does not deal with incidents, circles, or classes, as some others do, but with a universal law and man's relation to it. This view is sustained by all the terms of the passage. We have here not the husbandman (georgos) but a man (anthropos). The use of this term embraces the widest notion of earthly agencies.

The same general scope is seen in the thing sown. The word *sporos* is the most generic term for seed. Indeed, its primary meaning is a "sowing" of whatever kind. It would, therefore, apply equally to all things under the law of growth, the character of the harvest being determined by the specific nature of the seed sown.

The place of the sowing is not the man's own "field" as in the parable of the mustard seed given by Matthew, or his own "garden" given by Luke, but the ground, literally, the *earth*.

This simile has been called the parable of the seed growing gradually. It is in reality the parable of the vegetable kingdom. The gradual growth of the seed is not the prime truth of the passage, though a very beautiful one, and fault-lessly expressed in the terms: "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." These are but incidents, visibly measuring the great life process which starts from the earth and works restlessly on till the harvest is ready.

¹ Matt. xiii. 31. 2 Luke xiii. 19.

The reproductive power of nature as expressed through the kingdom of vegetation is made the analogue of that greater power in the spiritual world which through manifold processes makes for righteousness in men and which shall not cease its operations till the harvest shall come in the form of a perfected kingdom of God among men.

Professor Bruce in his great study, "The Kingdom of God," makes use of this parable twice in the body of his work; once erroneously as I think, and once inadequately; but in a footnote he makes certain observations which are exceedingly significant and suggestive. He says: "The parable above referred to contains the clearest statement of the truth that the law of growth obtains in the kingdom of God to be found in the New Testament. It is very doubtful whether this truth, in relation either to the individual or to the community was grasped by the apostles (not excepting Paul), not to speak of the Apostolic Church in general." The same

^{1&}quot;Kingdom of God," page 125.

author, in his exposition of the parables of our Lord, has a lengthy discourse on the parable. He asserts his belief in its genuineness and originality, that is, that it is an original logion of Jesus and not a modification of another parable as given by Matthew or Luke. He also cites Volkmar, Holtzman, Neander, and Pfleiderer to the same effect.

In his exposition of the parable Professor Bruce in some measure recognizes what, as I conceive, is the central meaning of the passage, but he unfortunately seizes upon a secondary point and makes it primary. He says: "It is meant to teach a doctrine of passivity not merely with reference to Christ, the first Sower of the word, but also with reference to those whose minds are the soil into which the truth is cast." He further says: "Few of our Lord's parables have been more unsatisfactorily expounded, as there are few in which a right exposition is more to be desired for the good of believers. It may

[&]quot;Parabolic Teaching of Christ."

seem presumptuous to say this, by implication censuring our brethren and commending ourselves. But a man's capacity to expound particular portions of Scripture depends largely on the peculiarities of his religious experience; for here, as in other spheres, it holds true that we find what we bring. Suppose, e. g., that the experience of a particular Christian has made him intimately acquainted with the momentous business of waiting on God for good earnestly desired and long withheld. The natural result will be an open eve for all Scripture texts, and they are many, which speak of that exercise, and a ready insight into their meaning. The case supposed is the writer's own, and therefore the parable now to be studied has been to him for many years a favorite subject of thought and fruitful source of comfort, viewed as a repetition in parabolic form of the Psalmist's counsel: 'Wait, I say, on the Lord.'

"In this light we have ever regarded this parable. That the progress of growth in the divine kingdom, in all spheres, is such as to call for waiting, being gradual and slow, and fixed down to law, seems to us its scope and burden."

I am extremely embarrassed at having to treat the doctrine of Professor Bruce as he does that of his "brethren," because whatever reason there was for his embarrassment in relation to them, there is still greater for mine in relation to him. Nevertheless, I feel constrained to say that his maxim, that in the interpretation of the Scriptures "we find what we bring," is a very dangerous one. It seems to encourage those prejudices of personal experience from which it is oftentimes necessary for us to become freed wholly in order to the discovery of the truth. I would also add to this category one other thing which is very likely to influence one's interpretations of Scripture, and that is the principal dogmas of the school of theology in which one has been brought up. Professor Bruce admits that the doctrine of passivity which he derives as the chief notion of the parable is especially in line with his experience in waiting. But

does not all this doctrine of waiting for "the Lord's own good time" in matters pertaining to personal religious experience also contain a trace of that doctrine of divine sovereignty which leaves out the attitude and agency of man?

Professor Bruce more than once admits that the primary purpose of this parable is to illustrate the growth of the kingdom when taken collectively, and yet his chief use of it, both in his "Kingdom of God" and the "Parabolic Teaching of Christ," is to illustrate the gradation and even slowness of this growth of the kingdom in the individual heart. I seriously question whether such a thought was in the mind of the Saviour when he uttered the parable. Indeed, it bears many marks of the absence of that line of thought.

Those who give the passage an individual interpretation, and find gradation and slowness of growth the chief point to be taught, fall into trouble about the husbandman. Here, as elsewhere, idleness breeds mischief; and the idleness of the husbandman in this parable has bred no little trouble for the commentators who hold that view. At least one of them has gone so far as to find employment for him in the parable of the sower, in such work as clearing out the thorns and other things which choke the word and make it unfruitful. There is in reality no need of any such difficulty.

Gradation in the growth of the kingdom is not the main point, although it is uniformly true and of sufficient importance to be called to our attention. So also the husbandman after he has sown the seed becomes a mere incident and is set aside as such, for the reason that he cannot understand nor push forward the great process about which the parable is conversant, that is, the action of that vital force in nature which makes for fruitfulness. He does not know how the seed grows, and he cannot help it to grow; he is, therefore, put aside till the time of the harvest when he is again brought in for the purpose of perfecting the symmetry of the figure.

Dr. Meyer says: "The teaching of the parable

is: Just as a man, after performing the sowing, leaves the germination and growth, etc., without further intervention, to the earth's own power, but at the time of ripening reaps the harvest, so the Messiah leaves the ethical results and the new developments of life, which his word is fitted to produce in the minds of men, to the moral self-activity of the human heart, through which these results are worked out in accordance with their destination, but will, when the time for the establishment of his kingdom comes, cause the *dikaious* to be gathered into it."

In holding that the "moral self-activity of the human heart" is the main truth of the passage, Meyer is clearly in advance of Professor Bruce; but he himself seems to be laboring under some confusion of thought, for he further says: "So the Messiah . . . will, when the time for the establishment of his kingdom comes, cause the dikaious (the just) to be gathered into it." This seems as if the kingdom he has in mind as the

[&]quot;Gospel of Mark," page 57.

kingdom of the parable were the Messianic kingdom soon to be formally set up. But he further says that the just shall be gathered into it by the angels, and refers to Matt. xxiv. 31 and xiii. 39, both of which passages refer to a state of things which shall occur only at the winding up of the earthly kingdom and the transportation of the subjects into the heavenly kingdom. The kingdom of the parable is indeed not to be taken for either the one of these or the other. The kingdom here referred to began with the work of Christ and the planting of his Church, and it will end in the final transportation of the fruits of it into a heavenly kingdom, but the very phase of it called forth in this parable is the growing period embraced between these two great events.

Archbishop Trench¹ devotes almost the whole of the space given to this parable to an attempted explanation of difficulties which need not, I think, have any existence if the parable were in-

^{1&}quot;The Parables of Our Lord."

terpreted in accord with its true meaning. The difficulties with which he deals spring very largely out of the interpretations made in regard to the husbandman, whereas, as I have already said, the husbandman, after he has performed his only essential part, namely, the sowing of the seed, becomes a mere incident, and is not, therefore, to be dealt with as a primary element in the parable. This view does not convert the husbandman into mere "drapery." He has a vital place in relation to the great truth which is taught; that place is that of the sower—not of the reaper, this latter function being incidental.

The Archbishop says: "It may excite surprise that instead of the words last quoted, 'the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself,' we do not rather read, 'the seed groweth and springeth up of itself,' for that, strictly speaking, is the point which the Lord is now urging; and if the earth signifies here, as it must, the heart of man, it is not in it, but in the word which it receives, that the living power resides." With due deference to the learned author, I beg to note that "strictly

speaking" this is not the point which the Lord is now urging. The Archbishop must have known on reflection that the seed does not have the power to grow of itself. Germination is the utmost of its function, and that only by virtue of a little refined earth which has been packed away in the cotyledon for that purpose. The seed may under certain conditions germinate without contact with the soil; but whether in that situation or in the soil, the plant will immediately begin to die unless kept alive by that which the earth alone supplies. It seems to me, therefore, that this turn of the Archbishop's, instead of revealing his usual discernment, is quite superficial and wide of the mark. Jesus had just finished saying that the seed "springeth and groweth up." How easy it would have been to say, the seed springeth and groweth up of itself-automate. But having assigned to the seed its well-known quality of being able to grow under proper conditions—as a stone is not—he proceeded to give in another statement an entirely distinct notion, one which calls attention away from the seed to a quality or power which belongs to the earth only.

The chief contribution which Trench makes on this place is the opinion expressed emphatically, though parenthetically, that all this ought to be applied to the growth and progress of the universal Church, and not to that of any single soul alone. His testimony at this point is valuable, and comes into harmony with the intimation of Professor Bruce to the same effect which has already been cited.

I think the parable wholly without difficulties if we apply it to the kingdom taken collectively, and discern the one great and peculiar point which it teaches. I am not unmindful that in any parable of the kingdom thus considered there must be much that applies incidentally to the kingdom in the individual heart. Nevertheless, it must be granted that in dealing with so vast and complex a community as the kingdom of God among men there must be some elements which are not thus applicable. It would be easy to show that most of the difficulties which com-

mentators have found have sprung out of a failure to give the parable that large community scope which it was intended to have. It is easy to see that in the building of even a limited earthly kingdom, while it is composed of individuals, and has its character from them in a large measure, there are yet many things which cannot be dealt with on the basis of the individual. Loyalty and patriotism are great and necessary qualities in the citizen, but a personal supervision of these qualities in the citizen cannot make a kingdom. The realm of statesmanship, while it must assume these important qualities lies, in reality, beyond them.

If the words, "the kingdom of God," be taken to mean the kingdom within the individual heart, then difficulties, as we have seen, arise which are immovable, especially the one in regard to the husbandman. If, on the other hand, we apply it to the mere beginning of the kingdom in the earth, that is, the coming of the new or Christian order as opposed to the old, we are met with two serious difficulties in particular, namely, the

gradualness of the growth and the nature and time of the harvest. But if we understand the kingdom of God to mean the reign of God among men, fully inaugurated in the teaching and ministry of Christ, and continuing through the whole process of saving the race, the difficulties begin to lessen, and with a proper adjustment of the secondary phases of the parable to its main truth, they vanish altogether.

The great points of the parable are four in number:

- I. The agency of sowing: a man, representing the Lord himself as Master of the kingdom using all available earthly agencies in the planting and cultivation of the true seed. The prophets and apostles, pastors, parents, teachers, churches, nations, civilizations, are a procession of agencies which he uses as his instruments for this end.
- 2. The thing sown: the seed, or the truth of the kingdom. This, of course, includes primarily the teachings of Jesus touching the relations of man to God, and a thousand corollaries touching man's relations with his fellow-man. But

beyond this it must doubtless include all forms of divine truth within the reach of the race whereby man may grow in his knowledge of God and in acceptable service to him. It will be a happy and broad day when men learn that the laws of psychology and of commerce, when correctly discerned, are as truly divine as the laws of gravitation and the Ten Commandments, and that rightly used all God's truth is adapted to the enlargement of the individual believer and to the growth of the kingdom of heaven among men.

3. The kingdom field, or the sphere of this sowing. Humanity itself, the race of mankind, is the ground in the parable. There is no difficulty in the fact that man, the sower of the seed, is also the soil that receives the seed. It is here as in the parable of the sower. The two functions are so distinct, although they may actually exist in the same person (for a man may even sow the seed in himself), that there is no confusion. But man, that is, the human mind, heart, life, as the ground which receives the

seed, has this said of it: "for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." In this statement the term used to express the notion of spontaneity is automate. It is used in only one other place in the New Testament. When the angel came and delivered Peter out of prison and they reached the iron gate of the city, it is said that it opened to them "of his own accord," automate. As no one would ascribe a real automatism or self-activity to the gate, so no intelligent religionist or truly scientific mind would locate the power of productiveness in the earth itself. This is a mere putting of a secondary cause for a primary. It means that beyond the husbandman and back of the seed there is a power which, acting through the earth upon the seed, makes for fruitfulness in the kingdom of vegetable life.

4. The harvest. This comes about under a law divinely announced, namely, that every seed shall bring forth fruit after its kind. This gen-

¹ Acts xii, 10.

eral law of growth, operating from the period of germination to that of the matured grain, is one of the most suggestive features of the parable. It furnishes not only a field of hopefulness, but goes so far as to show that the certainty of a perfected kingdom is fixed in unchangeable law. It leaves the determination of the character of the crop to him who sows the seed.

The harvest here referred to is not the great catastrophe mentioned in the parable of the tares, nor, indeed, is it any catastrophe at all. It is the normal order in agricultural life. The parable deals with functions: man sows and man reaps—not the same individual, but the same agency; while it is God who gives the increase. In a variety of crops the sowing of one and the harvesting of another often come very close together. So it is in the community life of the kingdom; the seed-sowing and the harvesting are continually recurring, and hence the functions in man, that of the sower and that of the

¹ Matt. xiii. 30

reaper, are so constantly active as to give no room for idleness.

Moreover, it must be noted that in the community life of the kingdom of God, just as in other communities, there are sowings and reapings which pass beyond the individual sphere, and while including individuals, of course, are community interests. Doctrines are sown, and states of society, institutions, and economic policies are reaped. Abraham sowed faith and obedience, and the harvest was the chosen people, containing the Jewish Church. Moses sowed the law, and his successors found the harvest in the greatest commonwealth of the olden times. Jonadab, the son of Rechab, sowed the seeds of total abstinence, and reaped generations of sober men. Jesus and his disciples sowed the seeds of love and peace, and families, communities, and nations have reaped the harvest and rejoiced in it. And thus it is that man, the individual, works and dies; but man, the race, abides and the kingdom grows.

The generalized effect of the main truth of the

parable, that "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself," is annually witnessed throughout the globe. With the spring there come the bursting of the innumerable buds of shrubs and trees and the springing up of vast fields of grain; with the summer, the fuller growths; and with the autumn, the richness of the harvest. A life force, immeasurable in its vastness, brings this growth about by gradations so fine as to be imperceptible; and only stages far apart, "the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear," measure to the limited eye of man the operation of this ceaseless energy of nature. Just as this evolution and procession of life out of the inorganic is due to the tireless push of an infinite power which is back of the earth, so the kingdom of God among men has its warrant in the divine life forces which move through man upon man for the beautification and perfection of his nature.

It thus becomes entirely clear, at least to the writer, that the great thought in the parable deals with the growth power in the vegetable world, and thus gives a more definite conception

of the forces at work in the kingdom of righteousness.

Some rather startling illustrations of the vastness of this force are easily at hand, and may fitly close our survey of the parable under consideration.

It will be recalled that in the parable of the sower the good soil is represented as bringing forth in three orders, thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. Instead of taking the wild growths of field and forest, the magnitude of which baffles all computation, I will call attention to only two of the rates of increase mentioned in the parable, the smallest and the largest. It chances that the thirty-fold rate of increase corresponds very closely with the increase of wheat, and the hundred-fold rate to the increase of Indian corn, the two great breadstuffs of the world. It is, indeed, not uncommon for one bushel of wheat to produce thirty bushels, and oftentimes much more, while a hundred bushels of corn from one bushel is really a very light yield.

Let us take first the wheat. I shall not en-

cumber the page with the enormous figures, but simply give the results.

Given one bushel of wheat to be sown, and all the product to be sown annually for twenty What will the harvest be at the end of the twentieth year? The answer is the last term of a geometrical series, the ratio of which is thirty, and the number of terms twenty. To the mind of even a slightly experienced mathematician these figures begin at once to suggest the need for a number of very large granaries in which to stow the wheat. For this purpose conceive the earth to be a hollow sphere eight thousand miles in diameter. Such a receptacle would contain more than thirty-one sextillions of bushels. Despite the vastness of these figures, it would require 10,995,989 such worlds to hold the crop; and the relatively insignificant fraction left over would be enough at the present rate of the world's annual product to feed the race for millions of years.

If we take the corn and apply the same data, except to give it its natural rate of increase,

that is, one hundred-fold, and for only fifteen years instead of twenty, we shall find need for 31,536,188 such cribs as the earth would make; and the inconsiderable fraction left over, though falling far short of enough to fill another world crib, would be sufficient to supply the race with as much corn as it now consumes for many billions of years.

As little as is thought of it, it thus appears that the power of growth in nature so far exceeds all other powers known to man, such as wind power, water power, steam and electricity, that the difference baffles the mind. So great, indeed, is this silent but immeasurable power that if death and decomposition had not been provided for in the scheme of life, that scheme would soon have broken down by the weight of its own products.

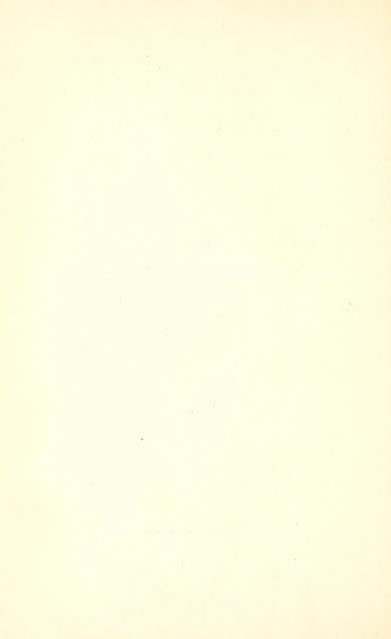
This somewhat continued survey of the parable of the growth power has been taken for the reason that it is only when we have discovered the true meaning of the analogue that we are able to gain a conception of the underlying principle by which the kingdom of God is to come among men in its fullness. It is only then also that the mind is in an attitude rightly to consider those methods of labor by which the Church can best make its contribution to this holy conspiracy.

In the next chapter the object shall be to call attention to those powers of growth in the Christian faith which, when rightly conditioned, are destined to bring the race under the benign dominion of Jesus Christ.



III.

THE OUTGROWING POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.



THE OUTGROWING POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

A CAREFUL study of Christianity as a body of doctrine, and more than all as a life, reveals the fact that it contains elements of vitality and growth wholly unknown to any other system of religion or thought. It contains within itself such forces of reproduction and expansion as render its multiple power, or rate of progress, so vastly superior to that of any other faith as to give assurance of its final triumph, with only the single condition that its holders shall observe in themselves and their offspring the laws of its normal growth.

In the development of Christianity as a racewide power there are two lines or spheres of growth, which while vitally related are yet distinct enough to require a somewhat separated treatment. One of these may be called the line

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of direct growth; and the other, that of lateral growth. The first of these has to do with the growth of Christianity directly through the family stock, and may be designated as propagation. The second has to do with growth which is by accretion and by conquest in the wider sense, and comes by the permeating influence of Christian thought and life, and by the power of the Holy Spirit working through men in the use especially of the word of God upon the non-Christian classes. This order of growth is revealed in its largest form in the work of missions and in revivals, and is properly called propagandism.

More than fifty years ago Horace Bushnell wrote on the religious culture of the young, and the consequent spread of the kingdom of God, with such penetration and grasp that but few writers since have been able to traverse the same field without walking somewhat in his paths. Among other discourses he has a most suggestive one on the outpopulating power of the

^{1&}quot;Christian Nurture."

Christian stock. This principle of development is there set forth with such clearness of statement and with such wealth of illustration that I cannot do better than to give here the central section of that discourse. He says:

"Christianity then has a power, as we discover, to prepare a godly seed. It not only takes hold of the world by its converting efficacy, but it has a silent force that is much stronger and more reliable; it moves by a kind of destiny, in causes back of all the eccentric and casual operations of mere individual choice, preparing, by a gradual growing in of grace, to become the great populating motherhood of the world. In this conviction we shall be strengthened—

"By the well-known fact, that the populating power of any race, or stock, is increased according to the degree of personal and religious character to which it has attained. Good principles and habits, intellectual culture, domestic virtue, industry, order, law faith,—all these go immediately to enhance the rate and capacity of population. They make a race powerful, not in the

North Carolina State Dibrary. mere military sense, but in one that, by century-long reaches of populating force, lives down silently every mere martial competitor. Any people that is physiologically advanced in culture, though it be only in a degree, beyond another which is mingled with it on strictly equal terms, is sure to live down and finally live out its inferior. Nothing can save the inferior race but a ready and pliant assimilation.

"The promise to Abraham depended, doubtless, on this fact for its fulfillment. God was to make his family fruitful, above others, by imparting himself to it, and so infusing a higher tone of personal life. Hence also the grand religious fact that this race unfolded a populating power so remarkable. Going down into Egypt, as a starving family, it begins to be evident in about four hundred years that they are over-populating the great kingdom of Egypt itself. 'The children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them.' Till finally the jealousy of the throne was awakened, and the king began to say, 'Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we!'

"Afterwards little Palestine itself was like a swarm of bees; building great cities, raising great armies, and displaying all the tokens, age upon age, of a great and populous empire. So great was the fruitfulness of the stock, compared with other nations of the time, owing to the higher personality unfolded in them, by their only partial and very crude training, in a monotheistic religion.

"And again, at a still later time, when the nation itself is dismembered, and thousands of the people are driven off into captivity, we find that when the great king of Persia had given out an edict of extermination against them, and would like to recall it but cannot, because of the absurd maxim that what the king has decreed must not be changed, he has only to publish another decree, that they shall have it as their right to stand for their lives, and that is enough to insure their complete immunity. 'They gathered

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themselves together in their cities, and throughout all the provinces, and no man could withstand them, for the fear of them fell upon all people.' In which we may see how this captive race had multiplied and spread themselves, in this incredibly short time, through all the great kingdom of the Medo-Persian kings.

"Or we may take a more modern illustration, drawn from the comparative history of the Christian and Mohammedan races. The Christian development begins at an older date, and the Mohammedan at a later. One is a propagation by moral and religious influences, at least in part; the other a propagation by military force. Both have religious ideas and aims, but the main distinction is that one is taken hold of by religion as being a contribution to the free personal nature of souls; and the other is taken hold of by a religion whose grip is the strong grip of fate. For a time, this latter spread like a fire in the forest, propagated by the terrible sword of predestination, and it even seemed about to override the world. But it by and by began to ap-

pear that one religion was creating and the other uncreating manhood; one toning up a great and powerful character, and the other toning down, steeping in lethargy, the races it began to inspire; till finally we can now see as distinctly as possible that one is pouring on great tides of population, creating a great civilization, and great and powerful nations; the other, falling away into a feeble, half-depopulated, always decaying state, that augurs final extinction at no distant period. Now the fact is that these two great religions of the world had each, in itself, its own law of population from the beginning, and it was absolutely certain, whether it could be seen or not, that Christianity would finally live down Mohammedanism, and completely expurgate the world of it. The campaigning centuries of European chivalry, pressing it with crusade after crusade, could not bring it under; but the majestic populating force of Christian faith and nurture can even push it out of the world, as in the silence of a dew-fall.

"What a lesson also could be derived, in the

same manner, from a comparison of the populating forces of the Puritan stock in this country, and of the inferior, superstitious, half-Christian stock and nurture of the South American states. And the reason of the difference is that Christianity, having a larger, fuller, more new-creating force in one, gives it a populating force as much superior.

"How this advantage accrues, and is, at some future time, to be more impressively revealed than now, it is not difficult to see. Let the children of Christian parents grow up, as partakers in their grace, which is the true Christian idea, and the law of family increase they are in is, by the supposition, so far brought into the Church, and made operative there. And then comes in also the additional fact that there are causes and conditions of increase now operative in the Church which exist nowhere else.

"Here, for example, there will be a stronger tide of health than elsewhere. In the world without, multitudes are perishing continually by vice and extravagance, and, when they do not perish themselves, they are always entailing the effects of their profligacy on the half-endowed constitution of their children. Meantime, in the truly Christian life, there is a good keeping of temperance, a steady sway of the passions, a robust equability and courage, and the whole domain of the soul is kept more closely to God's order; which again is the way of health, and implies a higher law of increase.

"Wealth, again, will be unfolded more rapidly under the condition of Christian living than elsewhere; and wealth enough to yield a generous supply of the common wants of life is another cause that favors population. True piety is itself a principle of industry and application to business. It subordinates the love of show and all the tendencies to extravagance. It rules those licentious passions that war with order and economy. It generates a faithful character, which is the basis of credit, as credit, of prosperity. Hence it is that upon the rocky, stubborn soil, under the harsh and frowning skies of our New England, we behold so much of high

prosperity, so much of physical well-being and ornament. And the wealth created is diffused about as evenly as piety. A true Christian society has mines opened, thus, in its own habits and principles. And the wealth accruing is power in every direction, power in production, enterprise, education, colonization, influence, and consequent popular increase.

"There will also be more talent unfolded in a Christian people, and talent also takes the helm of causes everywhere. Christian piety is itself a kind of holy development, enlarging every way the soul's dimensions. It will also be found that Christian families abound with influences especially favorable to the awakening of the intellectual principle in childhood. Religion itself is thoughtful. It carries the child's mind over directly to unknown worlds, fills the understanding with the sublimest questions, and sends the imagination abroad to occupy itself where angels' wings would tire. The child of a Christian family is thus unsensed, at the earliest moment, and put into mental action; this, too, under the

healthy and genial influence of Christian principle. Every believing soul, too, is exalted and empowered by union to God. His judgment is clarified, his reason put in harmony with truth, his emotions swelled in volume, his imagination fired by the object of his faith. The Church, in short, is God's university, and it lies in her foundation as a school of spiritual life, to energize all capacity, and make her sons a talented and powerful race.

"Here, too, are the great truths, and all the grandest, most fruitful ideas of existence. Here will spring up science, discovery, invention. The great books will be born here, and the highest, noblest, most quickening character will here be fashioned. Popular liberties and the rights of persons will here be asserted. Commerce will go forth hence, to act the preluding of the Christian love, in the universal fellowship of trade.

"And so we see, by this rapid glance along the inventories of Christian society, that all manner of causes are included in it, that will go to fine the organization, raise the robustness, swell the

volume, multiply the means, magnify the power of the Christian body. It stands among the other bodies and religions just as any advanced race, the Saxon for example, stands among the feebler, wilder races, like the Aborigines of our continent; having so much power of every kind that it puts them in shadow, weakens them, lives them down, rolling its over-populating tides across them, and sweeping them away, as by a kind of doom. Just so there is, in the Christian Church, a grand law of increase by which it is rolling out and spreading over the world. Whether the feebler and more abject races are going to be regenerated and raised up, is already very much of a question. What if it should be God's plan to people the world with better and finer material? Certain it is, whatever expectations we may indulge, that there is a tremendous overbearing surge of power in the Christian nations, which, if the others are not speedily raised to some vastly higher capacity, will inevitably submerge and bury them forever. These great populations of Christendom—what are they doing, but throwing out their colonies on every side, and populating themselves, if I may so speak, into the possession of all countries and climes? By this doom of increase, the stone that was cut out without hands shows itself to be a very peculiar stone, viz., a growing stone, that is fast becoming a great mountain, and preparing, as the vision shows, to fill the whole earth."

In addition to this direct growth of Christianity by propagation from within, there is, as has already been said, what may be termed a lateral growth which would of itself give the predominance to Christianity in conflict with all other religions, provided only that the direct propagation should be so far kept up as to prevent any heavy percentage of loss from within.

By lateral growth is meant that pervasive influence which proceeds from Christianity and affects the thought and policies of those who are not vitally Christian. The result of these influences is to prepare the way for that system of doctrine from which they proceed, and thus to open the way, by a kind of general favor, for the promulga-

tion of the faith among the non-Christian classes and peoples. The home, for example, based on monogamic marriage, is a distinct product of Christianity. But its influences are so visibly gra-· cious and powerful that even the non-Christian classes in Christendom are devoted to its maintenance; and these, while not seeking directly to make their children Christians, are entirely willing for them to enter the Sunday schools and be properly taught. This furnishes to a true and aggressive Christianity one of its largest opportunities, and it is probable that by an actual count millions of the present Sunday-school enrollment are of this class. These young people being thus reared in part by the Church, and being converted to Christianity, soon become the makers of Christian homes, and thus true centers of religious propagation. Take again the doctrine of temperance, which in its modern significance is a truly Christian doctrine. There was a time when in America the almost sole propagandists of this doctrine were the Church and a few related temperance societies. But the doctrine of temper-

ance was faithfully preached, and the practical value of the virtue so exploited that the worldlywise as well as the religious saw it; and now the strongest temperance societies in numbers and in their power practically to enforce the habit are apart from the Church, and are not supposed to be in any sense in league with it. Prominent, probably preëminent, among these is the vast railroad business of modern times. It is the policy of these corporations to take boys and young men and have them grow up in the business, and find their promotions in a graded and wellguarded way, fidelity and competency being the two ever-present conditions of a large and continued success. The business at almost every point calls for strong bodies, steady nerves, and clear heads. Strong drink is known to be the deadliest enemy to these conditions, and drunkenness is, therefore, fatal to the aspirations of railroad men. The same thing is true in nearly all the leading lines of commerce. It would, indeed, be difficult to measure the influence thus proceeding from business organizations in behalf

of a sober and strong manhood. So also it is true in a very large measure of honesty, reciprocity, and altruism, which together establish business on surer foundations, broaden its scope, and in various ways mitigate human conditions in a way wholly favorable to the fuller acceptance of that Christianity from which these principles spring.

It must also be noted that while Christianity in effecting spiritual salvation always begins at the bottom, with the individual, working upward into the circle, the community, the nation, it also has a way of beginning at the top and working downward. It has been, for example, but a few years since the Japanese began to study the sources of prosperity and power among the Christian nations of the West. They rightly discerned that it lay in our religion and in the educational system based upon it. They incorporated directly into their national life what they deemed the best, and within a few years experienced a national regeneration in a civic, educational, and industrial way. Within a quarter of

a century from the beginning of that study a great war broke out between Japan and Russia. In the conduct of this war the Japanese have exhibited a magnanimity, a considerateness, a true charity, in dealing not only with their own soldiers, but also those of the enemy—especially the sick, the wounded, the captured—which can only be accounted for by the fact that they have accepted the Christian view of honor and of duty in these relations. That this national spirit and the record of it in the new history of Japan shall exert a powerful influence upon the individual lives of the people, is beyond question. When in connection with this national order we regard the fact that the Japanese got their first impressions of Christianity from the missionaries of the Cross, men and women whose self-abnegation, love, and devotion to the welfare of an alien people led them to all manner of self-sacrifice, and that through their agency thousands were genuinely converted to the faith and life of Christ, we cannot doubt that the two forces working from beneath and above shall under the guidance and

power of the Holy Spirit soon transform the Japanese into a Christian people of the first rank.

Take again the doctrine of peace and its influence upon character and relations. Christianity requires peace as a condition of character in the individual and his relations; it extends thence to communities, nations, the world. Hence the doctrine of a universal peace of which all Christian powers are the guardians and in which all human interests, even of a material kind, are involved. This doctrine is wholly a product of the Christian system, despite the many and outrageous violations of it in the past by those who have called themselves Christians. It was not until quite recently that the thought of it had so far permeated the race as to articulate itself in a proposal for a peace congress of all Christian nations. While the work of that conference has not yet done much in a practical way beyond mitigating in some measure the atrocities of war, it has sent the notion abroad and fixed the thought of the race upon the possibility of a universal and enduring peace which shall be in harmony with the

honor and commercial welfare of all nations whether great or small. It is noteworthy in this connection that while within the last decade two of the most powerful of the Christian nations, England and Russia, have engaged in war with weaker nations, the great citizenship of those nations, which constitutes the thinking and creating force of each, has been strongly opposed to these wars. The doctrine of peace is destined finally to prevail, and thus Christianity will have wrought out in a lateral or indirect way another of the principal conditions for the universal acceptance of the reign of Christ in the earth.

There is another feature in connection with the growth power of Christianity which deserves especial mention, and that is its spirit of propagandism. It is the only faith of the world that bears the truly winged seed, divinely furnished, as it were, for riding the winds that blow over all seas and all lands. This condition comes from the fact that its central impulse is love, the great giving affection, which can find its supreme satisfaction only in the impartation of its best to the

neediest. It is the only faith which becomes enriched by constant drains upon the resources of its adherents, and attains to fullness by lavish outpourings. Hence it is that every day witnesses the establishment of new seed points in circles, communities, and nations not hitherto reached. Each of them in turn becomes a new center of propagation, and thus the kingdom grows normally in all lands and communities under laws that are as fixed and inevitable in their operation as are those which insure annually the bread that sustains the life of the race.

The last and one of the most important forces of lateral growth is what is known as the revival power of Protestant Christianity. While in productiveness it is by no means equal to the more normal and quieter operations of the law of growth as manifested in the development of the kingdom from within, it is still a factor of tremendous value. Its relation to the normal order is very much as that which an electric storm in nature sustains to the world of atmospheres and of electricity. A genuine revival of religion is,

as a mere fact, the sublimest manifestation of power known among men. It is the storm phasis of the moral world. The aspects, functions, and results are very similar to those of the natural storm. The real origins are hidden; the times cannot be foreseen; the noises and the silences are so related as to be alike impressive. The invisible energies are working toward healthy conditions by breaking up stagnancy and changing the atmospheres, and by the concentrated shafts of fire which burn out the mephitic conditions, and leave in their path a life-giving tonic which reaches the blood through the breath. Such occasions press all classes of men into a sort of oneness by the presence of a power superior to all, and movements become easy and appear natural which otherwise would appear as out of order or impossible. As it is no discredit to the bravest of men to run for coverture from the bolts and blasts of the hurricane, so in the revival crisis the last to be expected may become even the first to seek shelter without the feeling of having done anything less than the sane and appropriate thing. Even those under cover, when they see the stormbeaten man reach a place of safety, feel a sense of relief which they could not feel but for the fact that they also are enveloped in the same atmosphere of storm and stress. There are many men who become so morally indurated that they can be made to realize their true relations and real conditions only by the roar of the thunders and the tingle of the electric currents along their nerves. But it is also true that in such seasons others, not only the less hardened among transgressors, but even the truly Christian, are correspondingly touched and aroused.

Such results are not surprising when we regard the fact that the power which moves in every true revival is the power of the Holy Spirit, immanent, pervasive, and dynamic; that the instrument is the word of God made alive and imperative by the Spirit's touch; and that the channel or agency of this power is the Church of Christ, illuminated and surcharged for the performance of one of its most important ministries. We do not wonder, therefore, at the many great and

gracious results which spring from revivals of religion. Characters which have been wrecked by sin are renewed and recast; homes that have been desolated become houses of prayer and praise; enmities that have eaten into the life of the community are cured; institutions of temptation and crime are abolished; the moral aspect of life and its purposes are changed; the various elements of the social order are welded into a closer unity for the achievement of all good ends; the Church itself gains a higher and wider view of the ends for which it exists; its life is deepened, its sympathies broadened, and its faith rendered stronger by this visible triumph of its divine Head over the power of the adversary.

By this agency millions who had missed the better way have been swept as by force into the kingdom of God, many of whom have been faithful and some of them great in the kingdom, who by the establishment of Christian households have done much to multiply the holy seed.

It is altogether probable that the greatest revival period of the Church is not in the past but in the future, and that it shall come only when the membership of the Church shall consist predominantly of a generation reared from infancy in the nurture of the Lord. Then the word of God, which is the instrument of the Spirit for such ends, will be in the heart, understood in that strange, deep way which becomes possible only by an assimilation in the life of the believer. Such a Church will also have a power of witnessing which will be rationally irresistible, and it will therefore serve as a truly broad and vital organism through which the Spirit may reach the unsayed.

Nevertheless, as the electric storm, despite its sublimity and its life-giving value, cannot be relied upon as the source of the electricity everywhere needed in the scheme of life, for the mechanical uses which men make of the mystic "fluid," so neither can the revival power of Christianity be relied upon as the chief means of populating the kingdom of God among men, or of securing that growth which is ordained of God in the sphere of spiritual life.

Thus it is that the Christian stock, by the constant growing in of the finer and more robust elements of manly character, shall more than equal other stocks in the race for supremacy; and thus it is that the continence, temperance, industry, frugality, the superior intellectual creativeness, and above all the right valuation of man at the right time for securing his perfection-all which are the inevitable outgrowths of the Christian faithshall furnish a percentage of gain over all other stocks that gives, with only the time element added, mathematical assurance of complete domination. And thus it is also that the lateral or indirect growth of Christianity, by its doctrines of the home, of social purity, of temperance, of peace, and of human as well as divine love, propagated by other agencies than those of the Church; by its missionary movements and revival influences, shall both strengthen the inward growth of the stock and prepare other soils for it, until it shall fill the whole earth with its presence and with the fruits of holiness.



IV.

CHRIST'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM.



CHRIST'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM.

THE positions taken in the chapter on a view of the kingdom are that the kingdom of God among men is to be universal, that is, that it shall penetrate and finally include all other kingdoms so as to envelop the race in its blessed dominion; that this result shall come about by a process of growth; that man is to sow the seed of divine truth and reap a harvest of Christian character, issuing in godly civilizations; all of which is accomplished by a divine power working in and through men.

When we see that Jesus has invariably set forth the process by which his kingdom shall come under the figure of growth, we are rationally impelled into the inquiry as to when this process ought to begin in the individual life and how it may best be conducted. There have been but two general theories on this subject. They have, as we have already seen, been fitly designated as the rupture, revolution, or transplantation theory, on the one hand; and on the other, as the nurture, evolution, or growth from the seed theory. The one is the theory of adult conversion as a primary or chief means of making up the citizenship of the kingdom; and the other, that of training the childhood of the race in the knowledge of God and in the habits of right living.

In all such matters there is, of course, but one ultimate authority, and that is the thought of God. This thought is expressed in his constitution of the nature of man and in his word. The first branch of this inquiry is reserved for a later stage of the discussion. The second may be sufficiently dealt with in a brief examination of the

TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE SUBJECTS OF HIS KINGDOM AND THE WAY OF ENTERING IT.

It is well to note at the outset that Jesus himself was not an evangelist in the ordinary sense. The few years of his ministry were spent chiefly in teaching the doctrines of his kingdom, and in the performance of deeds of mercy destined to become the sure foundations of institutions which were ever afterwards to accompany that system of doctrine. He did, however, give here and there a measure of the adult populations with which he dealt, out of which we may gather his estimate of them as material for a spiritual kingdom. A brief survey of this estimate will prepare us for a fuller understanding of Christ's teaching concerning children.

The parable of the sower is without doubt the parable of adult populations. It is given by all the synoptists with only minor variations. In it Jesus sets forth the insuperable obstacles in dealing with people who have been established in the habits of thought and conduct which belong to a worldly or nonspiritual life. Jesus himself, at the request of the disciples, expounds the parable, and thus puts its application beyond question. The passage brings to notice four classes of hearers.

The first are those by the wayside who hear but do not understand the word. Jesus declares that the wicked one comes and takes away the seed which is sown in the heart. This calls to our attention the fact that there is ever a liability to diabolical interference with the truth, especially when it is sown in the hearts of those who do not love it; and, alas, how large a class that is in every land!

The second class is composed of those who receive the seed into stony places. These hear the word and anon with joy receive it, but because they have no root in themselves they fall away when trials come. How vast is the number of those who have intellectual pleasure in the truth when publicly and ably administered, and who under the impulsions of a sentimental mood ally themselves with the truth, only to desert its fortunes when they come into circles or conditions where the truth is unpopular and something must be suffered in its behalf!

The third class embraces those represented by the thorny ground. These hear, but the cares of

this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things choke the word and make it unfruitful. This brings directly to our view the unnumbered millions of grown people who are so burdened with the cares of life, some of them in themselves legitimate and honorable cares, that they are unfitted or indisposed to give virtuous consideration to the truth which saves. Next to them in alignment are those other millions who are breathlessly chasing the riches phantom, and have neither time nor taste for the concerns of a spiritual life. And finally comes that large class of people who are under the dominion of divers worldy and fleshly desires which they are unwilling to surrender in order to enter the kingdom, a vast horde intoxicated with the varied pleasures of the life of sensation.

The fourth class of hearers are those represented by the good ground. These hear the word and receive it into good and honest hearts, and it brings forth fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. Even in this class the scale of variety is very striking. Why not uniformity, all a hun-

dred-fold? I do not care to press the parable too far at this or any other point; but, having been reared on a farm, I cannot but reflect that even in the best soil a mixture of conditions, such as some rockiness, some thorns, though falling far short of a thicket, and some fallowness due to bad preliminary plowing, seriously affects the productiveness of the field.

I have no disposition to claim, because three of the four classes mentioned caused the word to die without fruit, that three-fourths of the adult people who hear fail to accept the truth. But he would be a bold interpreter indeed who would claim this parable as authority for the belief that even a majority of the irreligious adults of any generation are likely to be so reached by the gospel as to be saved by it.

The scribes and Pharisees, the most religious class among the Jews, Jesus pronounced hypocrites; and having given illustrations which bore up the charge, he ended with a figure of speech which for breadth of meaning and condensed energy of expression has never been equaled—that

of "the whited sepulcher." These were the same people whom John the Baptist a few months earlier had found occasion to designate as a "generation of vipers," terms which Jesus repeatedly applied to them.

When Jesus cleansed ten lepers and only one came back from the priests to give thanks for his deliverance, Jesus felt the point of their ingratitude, and said: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger" (Samaritan).

The rich young ruler, who had such personal qualities as led Jesus to look upon him with peculiar regard, heard the hard demands which Jesus laid down, and then turned and went away sorrowful.

These particular instances are cited, not for their numerical value, of course, but because they represent states of mind and heart too largely common to men in every age under similar conditions.

On the shores of Galilee Jesus told one of the

largest and most hopeful of the multitudes that followed him that they followed him not for even his signs, but for the loaves and fishes. The most pathetic incident of his life was when he wept over the blindness of the people to spiritual things, and said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" However much of pain came to him from this state of things, there was no disappointment in the sense of a failure to reap an expected harvest. He knew that a generation confirmed as that was in a habit of thought and moral conduct would not take upon itself the hard terms which his gospel proposes to the proud and self-sufficient.

If to these facts and utterances it be answered that with the coming of Pentecost a different order was inaugurated, it is granted that the gift of

¹ Matt. xxiii. 37.

the Spirit did largely increase the number of conversions. But in considering this holy convocation and its marvelous outcome, we must not fail to follow steadily after the truth as it bears on the question which we are studying. Let us note that the persons there assembled were in all probability the most religious few thousand to be found throughout the whole earth; that there had just occurred in that very community the most extraordinary series of events in the history of men; that barely sufficient time had elapsed since these occurrences for such reflection upon them as would naturally lead to the conviction of their divine significance, and that the inaugural movement of the Spirit upon the Church was accompanied by sights and sounds which thrilled every observer through and through with the sense of the mysterious and awful presence of God.

The outcome of that most notable of days was the conversion of three thousand people. If we come from that day to our own, and assume in the estimate the existence of such a Pentecost, with the same result, three thousand conversions

every day, it would require one thousand three hundred and seventy years to convert the people now living on the earth. It would require forty of such revival centers, each turning out three thousand converts every day for thirty-three years in succession to convert the people of one generation. At the end of that period more people would be on the earth awaiting their turn than were present at the beginning of the movement. In view of these facts, it is not to be denied that the rupture theory of salvation has a divine warrant in its proper place, and that it furnishes the ground of hope for many individuals who have missed a better estate; but it is not to be wondered at that those who hold it as the chief means of saving the race become discouraged as to the general outcome of the Christian scheme and sink into a sort of bold but pious pessimism which expects this order to be ended soon in a cataclysm of divine power and impatience.

Meanwhile Jesus was busy with another work, in which he exemplified what was to be the process by which his kingdom should become established on sure foundations. That work was a work of training—the training of the twelve.

No discerning reader of the evangelists can fail to see with what unreserve Jesus labored through his whole ministry to instruct the twelve in the elements of his kingdom. This process was carried on by the public discourse, by daily talks when apart from the multitudes, by miracles, by the constant exhibition of all great personal qualities, and by a ceaseless example of devotion to duty. Surely no other twelve men in the history of the race ever had such schooling. Nor can it be doubted that Jesus in choosing the twelve selected the best material that the situation afforded. And yet, such was the stubbornness of their beliefs and of their unbelief, such was the slowness of their hearts to surrender what they contained and to receive what Jesus had to impart, that the boundless patience of the Teacher was even near the close of his career put under a severe strain. Of these twelve disciples thus exclusively employed and thus divinely guided for three years, three suffered a serious defection from him at the

end of his ministry, one of which was final and fatal.

What may have come to the kingdom above by the popular labors of Jesus and his immediate disciples we have no way to find out, but we may easily see that to the infinite patience and tact with which Jesus trained the twelve the kingdom below owes everything. No one can follow the Scripture details of this process, especially with the illumination which they have received through Professor Bruce's great work, "The Training of the Twelve," without the conviction that the chief difficulty which Jesus had to encounter was that he was dealing with the gnarled oak and knotted cedar instead of with flexible plants which would have yielded themselves readily to his conforming touch, and thus transmuted their life forces into forms of faultless symmetry and enduring strength.

THE TEACHING AND EXAMPLE OF JESUS CON-CERNING CHILDREN.

Jesus was in the highest sense the champion of childhood. In this respect he was unlike all

the other great masters of men. They had understood but very imperfectly, if at all, the divine purpose in the long-continued helplessness of the human offspring. Jesus saw in it the chief opportunity for the establishment of a spiritual kingdom among men, and while his utterances on the subject are not voluminous, they are so truly revolutionary that the Christian era may be properly called the era of the child.

Concerning childlikeness, and the relation of children to himself and to his kingdom, Jesus made but nine short statements. But these, when fully examined, are found to cover the whole ground, and to furnish to the Church so full a revelation of God's will as to leave no room for doubt or misconception.

I. Whoever would Enter the Kingdom must Become Childlike in Order Thereto.

The first of Christ's sayings to be considered has reference to admission into the kingdom, and really involves the whole question of membership in it. He said to his disciples, who were mature

men and already partially at least instructed in the truths of the kingdom: "Except ve be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." The occasion which gave rise to the utterance at that time was a wrangle among certain of the disciples as to which of them should be first in the kingdom. They were revealing those very disqualifications which are incident to an adult stage of life in such as have not been previously trained in the perception of the spiritual aspects of life. They were in bondage to an established habit of thought, the habit of self-consideration. This preoccupation rendered it difficult for them to understand that spirit of unselfishness which is the first condition of genuine discipleship. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." The process is from fullness to emptiness, and then, a refilling.

In this utterance Jesus was in reality announcing the great general law of entrance into the kingdom of truth, a law which, being true of the

¹ Matt. xviii. 3; Mark x. 15; Luke xviii. 17.

highest or spiritual realm, includes all the inferior provinces. We are not surprised, therefore, to hear Mr. Huxley, a recognized authority in his sphere of research, saying: "Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this."

There are no risks to run. If what Mr. Huxley had already said be true, it follows that this course upon which he had resolved is the only one from which all risks that are to be considered by a seeker after truth have been eliminated.

The use I would make of Mr. Huxley's witness is brief but important. It is this: that if this childlike attitude is necessary in order to the dis-

^{1&}quot;Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 235.

covery of truth in the realm of mere fact, how much more so in the realm of spiritual truth, where the data are vastly more occult and the range of interest is so much wider. Mr. Huxley's dictum expresses in well-chosen terms two of the very conditions which by general consent are the childlike qualities that prepare one for an entrance into the spiritual kingdom. The first of these is the giving up of "every preconceived notion," and the other the spirit to "follow humbly wherever nature leads," that is, wherever truth leads. Now these are precisely the disqualifications aimed at in the requirement that those who would enter the kingdom of God must become as little chil-The trouble in the case of adults is preconceptions, preoccupations, and a lack of humility or willingness to be led. It is because of the difficulty which the adult experiences in becoming childlike that so few attain to large and reliable knowledge in the realm of science of which Mr. Huxley speaks; and for the same reason the large majority of those who do not enter the kingdom of God in childhood never enter it

at all, at least in so far as the kingdom of God and the visible Church are identical.

But religious teachers have at this point fallen into a grave error, which is a virtual surrender of the essential point in Christ's utterance, and a large part of the Church is even now held in the paralyzing grasp of that error. It came about in this way: The race as known at the coming of Iesus was a race of adults. Childhood, especially outside of the Jewish commonwealth, was regarded as a necessary evil antecedent to manhood. It was endured, passed through, because it had to be passed through to reach the stage of real being. When the disciples came to address themselves to this work, it was aimed at a generation of fathers who had to be converted before there could be a Christian childhood. Christian fatherhood must precede. But on the threshold of this work the idols were met with; there were preconceptions, preoccupations, prejudices, habits. To meet this difficulty it was perfectly natural that Christ's statement, that all who sought to enter must become as little children, should be made use

of as an illustration, by which it would easily come about that childhood would become a mere analogue of conditions, and the children themselves recede out of sight as claimants for actual membership in the new kingdom. Hence it has happened that the Church has up to this time spent much more energy in trying to teach men how to become good children than in teaching children how to become good men. It was necessary to teach both lessons, but the calamity is that the former has been taught almost to the exclusion of the latter, and to its consequent obscuration.

When Jesus said to his disciples, and through them to all adults who seek to enter the kingdom, that they must become as little children, he raised by implication a question which may as well be articulated here, namely this: Which is the easier, for one to act the child while he is a child, or, having grown up to manhood with its fixed conditions, to turn about and become a child again? At most, the conclusion to be derived from this statement of Jesus cannot be reduced below this,

that as childlikeness is a state necessary to entrance into the kingdom, childhood is the surest and best time for that entrance.

2. Whoever, having Entered the Kingdom, would Become Great in it, Must Continue Childlike.

As has already been seen, the dispute among the disciples was concerning greatness or superiority in the kingdom. According to their conception of the kingdom, that was a legitimate subject of discussion, but according to Christ's it was not. Hence he said to them: "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

The law of entrance and the law of growth are identical. The very qualities which fit a child for receiving the kingdom prepare a man for progress in it. He who disregards this law not only ceases to grow, but is in great danger of losing that which he has already attained.

When St. Paul declares that when he was a

¹ Matt. xviii. 4.

child he spake, understood, and reasoned as a child, but that when he became a man he put away childish things, he did not mean to convey the idea that he put away any of those qualities enjoined in the condition of entrance into the kingdom. Humility, reverence, docility, frankness, faith, the unsuspecting and forgiving disposition, are the childlike qualities, and they are alike the qualities of even the greatest men. Paul in writing to the Corinthian believers said: "Brethren, be not children, in understanding; howbeit in malice be ve children, but in understanding be men." So St. Peter says: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil-speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby."

3. To Receive the Child is to Receive Christ.

After announcing that the way to greatness in the kingdom of heaven was by childlike humility, Jesus passes from this characteristic of the child to the child himself, and says: "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Nothing could be more intensely personal or more finely dramatic. All principles and rights are merged into personalities. Whoso receives these receives Me; whoso offends these offends Me; as if the children were the special envoys of the King of kings. There is enough in this statement about receiving children, even if it stood alone, to furnish the grounds for the most elaborate and painstaking system of shepherding the most obscure and neglected children on earth.

4. The Little Ones Shall Not be Despised.

Jesus left no room for carelessness on the part of his disciples in dealing with this class of persons. He said: "Take heed, that ye despise not one of these little ones." The mildest meaning of the word despise is, to undervalue; the harshest is, to pour contempt upon. The fault of the disciples then is the fault of the Church now, that of undervaluing children and the child-

¹ Matt. xviii. 5; Luke ix. 48; Mark ix. 37. ² Matt. xviii. 10.

like. The making of a wrong estimate results in all manner of wrong-going. Undervaluation is the "original sin," while neglect, contempt, and offenses make up the category of "actual transgression." The provision in the household and the Church fold for the care of children and for their development marks accurately the value in which the child is held.

5. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

To offend is not simply to wound in the feelings. This of itself is a matter well worthy of regard by every Christian. But to offend means, to cause to stumble, to mislead, to injure in any serious respect, and especially in their relations as believers on Christ.

The figure by which the penalty for offending

¹ Matt. xviii. 6.

these little ones is set forth is a very striking one, as if Jesus would thereby arrest and hold attention. The millstone mentioned here was of the large kind turned by an ass, rather than that turned by hand. The mode of killing was not Jewish at all, but Grecian; a Gentile method; quick, terrific, cheap, contemptuous, without even the doubtful consolation of a funeral cortége, or hired mourners. The weight dragged the victim instantly to the bottom—"to the depth of the sea"—a thud, a gurgle, and no trace of him was left. The neglected child is the millstone about the neck of modern society.

There are not a few writers who hold that although the statement immediately preceding this ("whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me") has to be taken to mean the literal child, this about offenses is to be understood as referring to weak or obscure believers. The chief reason for this seems to be that the phrase "little ones" here used is qualified by the further description, "which believe in me," indicating personal agency.

It seems to me that this judgment is made up without proper regard for the situation. In the first place, this very child was probably large enough to be going about of himself. Jesus called the child to him. There was a tradition in the early Church that this child was Ignatius, afterwards saint and martyr. It is highly probable that the child, whoever he was, was capable of faith and was in the pure childish sense a believer. I would not contend for this, but merely assert its probability. The situation is really just as strong in regard to the clause, "which believe in me," if we admit that this child, who was the object lesson in the discourse, was too young to be a believer as those were, doubtless, who were brought by their mothers, and of whom Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of God"; for while early infancy is the time for the dedication of children to Christ, it is certainly the time of greatest safety for the infants themselves. They are, at that stage, in no liability of being misdirected or offended. But when they have grown up a little and reached the point at which they may

believe or disbelieve, they have reached the danger point and period—the time at which above all others they need right guidance, and at which they may be most effectively destroyed by being thrown out of the natural and easy way of belief in God. I truly believe that it was this later stage of childhood, this field of childhood faith, so sacred, so sensitive, at once so hopeful and so dangerous, around which Jesus is now throwing the guard of this startling penalty. The commentators seem to have kept their eyes too steadily fixed upon the infantile period, as if it were an unchanging state, whereas a little naturalness in the consideration of childhood would have made Christ's words about offending the little ones who believe in him not only explicable, but almost necessary at the very point where they occur in the discourse. The two statements are indeed but the two hemispheres of a single notion, namely, how to treat children in their relation to Christ. In other words, the statement about offenses is not only logically demanded by the situation, but those who have had experience in the

religious direction of children would readily grant that if either notion, that of infantile reception or dedication, or the subsequent guardianship over the faith of the growing child, had to be omitted, it would be far better to omit the former. But the point is that the two things cannot, in harmony with the doctrine of Christ, be thought apart from each other.

Both the applicability of this text to children themselves and its far-reaching purport are stressed by the reflection that most of what the Church is now engaged about in the edification of its own members, and in behalf of the masses outside, is rendered necessary only by a failure to rightly direct the now grown-up populations in that very period of childhood faith of which Jesus is speaking.

This passage about offending the little ones occurs in almost identical terms in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew it is the last statement in what is evidently a continuous discourse concerning children. In Mark it is separated from such a discourse only by an incident and

certain remarks of the Master upon it. A child had in both cases been placed in the midst. Mark represents Jesus as giving the same line of remark as that given by Matthew; but when he reached the point of saying, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me; and whoso receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me," Mark ix. 37, John "answered him," and gave the incident about the man who was casting out devils in Christ's name but who was not following with the disciples. When Jesus had given due attention to John's interruption and carried the lesson to the point of showing that the least favor shown, not to the "little ones" but even to the larger ones, the twelve, in his name, should be rewarded, he returns to the original line of remark, and thus says in this way what in Matthew is an unbroken discourse.

According to Luke the passage occurs just after the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and being immediately preceded by a statement containing the doctrine of offenses, seems to have an independent position in so far as its relation to children is concerned. This gives good room for the inference that it was also intended to apply to the little ones of Christ in both senses—the children and the weak or childlike. But all the indications are that in the original logion, whether we take that to be Matthew's account as some think, or Mark's as others, the doctrine of offenses against the "little ones" was first spoken with direct reference to children.

The simple teaching of these several passages is that as Jesus took the child as the type of an acceptable membership in the kingdom, and announced the inclusion of all others who should be converted by becoming like them, so he put the guard of the millstone figure around the simple faith of childhood, and then proceeded to place adult believers who were like the children, in respect particularly of being weak and humble, under the same protection against the stronger who would take advantage of their weakness to oppress, injure, or turn them from the faith.

As a conclusion of this survey let us note that when Jesus undertook to set forth the conditions of membership in the kingdom, both as to entrance into it and growth within it, and to enforce the necessity of guardianship over the weak, the child, according to both Matthew and Mark, was actually present and was being made an object lesson and an analogue, while the weak, humble, obscure adult was never introduced anywhere in the Gospels as a subject of discourse, unless in Matt. xviii. 14 and Luke xvii. 2, and only then under the terms "little ones," terms undoubtedly borrowed from the realm of literal childhood.

But why such pains in seeking to fix the interpretation of these passages? The answer to this inquiry covers a most important field, and one which cannot but affect the estimate in which childhood is held, and which must inevitably, therefore, affect the Church's teaching and policy in regard to children.

If, on the one hand, Christ's use of the child was merely rhetorical; if he set him in the midst merely for the purpose of calling attention to certain abstract qualities which children are supposed to possess, and which men must have retained or regain in order to enter the kingdom; if such terms are used in regard to receiving a child in the name of Christ, in the statement, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," "despise not one of these little ones," "whosoever shall offend," etc., are intended to cover merely the same field of qualities and to protect weak and humble adults; then a conclusion follows which warrants a certain course of action wholly at variance with the course to be pursued in any other event. The conclusion thence to be reached is that Jesus taught nothing with regard to the actual relation of children to him and his kingdom, and the policy to be pursued is one that looks wholly to a system of adult evangelism.

If, on the other hand, these sayings apply primarily to the children, and by inference or by separate teaching in similar terms to others like them, we have in the teaching of Jesus a distinct doctrine of universal child-relationship to the kingdom of heaven and such general direction for

treatment of them as will insure their maintenance within this fold, and their growth to a manhood unmarred and unweakened by those hard conditions which are universally present in irreligious adults.

When we consider the divine order in regard to children under the first dispensation, how they were inducted into the Church at eight days of age by circumcision just as Abraham was in mature life, how they were trained constantly in the family school of the law, and how in the latter times they assumed formal or full relations at the age of fourteen, it is scarcely conceivable that Jesus in establishing the new dispensation should have said nothing as to the relation of children to his kingdom and the proper treatment of them by those who were to be the real builders of the Church. And yet this is precisely what happened, this inexplicable silence on the part of the great Teacher, touching a subject of prime importance and universal human interest, if those commentators be right who interpret the sayings of Jesus about children and the little ones as merely rhetorical, or illustrative of other persons and their relations.

6. "Suffer the little children to come,"

Again the disciples through blindness were objecting. Mothers had brought their children to the place where Jesus was teaching that the children might receive his blessing. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus made way for their approach, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The term means permit, allow them to come. The impulse is within them, and within the hearts of truly religious parents, and the demand of Jesus is that it shall not be obstructed.

A corresponding truth is that all the elements in Jesus are such as appeal supremely to the child-like heart. His kindness, his gentleness, his candor, his simple majesty, his profound sympathy, his self-immolating love, his lot of suffering, his tragic death, and his resurrection, are qualities

¹ Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii, 15.

and conditions which awake all the generous love of childlike hearts and draw them toward him. What the children need, therefore, most of all is a revelation of Christ through the lives and teachings of those who have the right and place of authoritative guidance.

7. "And forbid them not."1

This command has reference to those who have authority over children, as parents, teachers, and pastors. If interpreted in the strictest harmony with the incident which called it forth, it has primary application to authorized religious teachers and the Church. The mothers and the children were coming; it was the disciples who forbade them and who were rebuked by the Master. It has, hence, on either side an official force and flavor, and may be regarded as primarily a command to the Church.

That the modern Church is, in a large measure, violating this command greatly to its own

¹Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 15.

undoing, scarcely needs to be argued. By a policy of chilling neglect, by the almost exclusive expenditure of its energies upon efforts at adult conversion and culture, by omitting from the architecture of its houses of worship and of its sermons all consideration of a place for the little ones, by a failure to provide any well-adapted system of instruction until very recent years, and only partially so now, and above all by a failure to use the family in accord with the divine intent for the training of children in the nurture of a spiritual life, the Church is, like the disciples in the incident, forbidding the children to come to Jesus; and the Christ of to-day, like Jesus in that incident, is rebuking his remiss and shortsighted followers.

8. "For of such is the kingdom of heaven."1

Here, as in the other instances mentioned, the scholars differ widely as to the primary meaning of the text. Bengel, Paulus, de Wette, Arnoldi,

¹ Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16.

Keim, Hilgenfeld, Matthew Henry, and others, hold "of such" to mean literal children; while a number of others, perhaps fully as learned and skilled, prefer to regard the words as referring not to the literal children, but as a measure of certain qualities which all must possess in order to fitness for the kingdom. There seems to me to be but little real room for controversy here. The statement, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven," is assigned as a reason, or ground of propriety, of their being allowed to come to the Master of the kingdom for his blessing; and the saying must mean one of two things-either, the kingdom of heaven is of such as these, but not these; or, these and those who are like these. Certainly the former of these meanings is impossible.

Historically, the first interpretation given to this saying of our Lord, by the Church, was that certain childlike qualities, such as faith, love, obedience, etc., were necessary in order to salvation; a position which is true, but which had a full statement in another and entirely different situation, as has already been shown. A second

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interpretation was that some children, under certain conditions, might become members of the visible Church, which was a real and valuable advance, but which in no wise measured up to the full meaning, which seems to be this: that the fittest of all for membership in the kingdom are the children themselves, and that when Christ's ideal Church is realized it will be a Church of children—that is, whose membership shall consist in the main of those whose entrance into it was under the natural and easy conditions furnished by childhood, and whose spiritual growth has kept pace with the physical and intellectual development until a well-rounded manhood has been attained under the laws of growth which belong to all the kingdoms of life. This interpretation does not, on the one hand, deny admittance to any individual, however aged, who by neglect or willfulness may have missed the early path; nor does it, on the other hand, squint at the doctrine of inherited holiness or any view that would minimize the necessity of being born again by the Spirit of God

9. "That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." 1

This gives heaven's estimate of the value of childhood, and this vista is opened earthward that men may see their dependent offspring in the light which falls out of the eternal and invisible world. This guardianship, no doubt, extends in a peculiar sense to the mothers of the children, as those standing next to them in the divine order of protection and guidance.

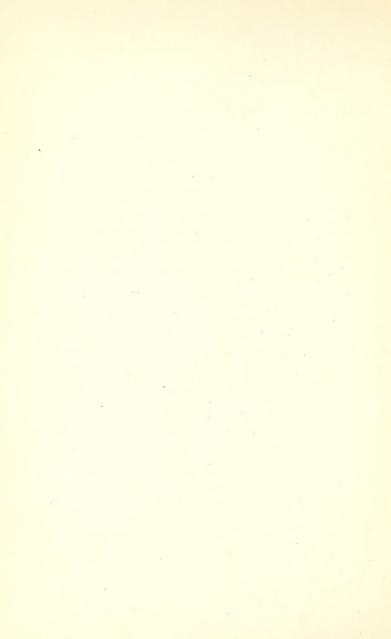
This survey would be incomplete without a word in regard to Christ's acceptance of the praises of the children on the occasion of his last visit to the temple. Luke's account says that the praises were from the whole multitude of the disciples, and that certain Pharisees said to Jesus, "Master, rebuke thy disciples," whereupon Jesus said, "I will tell you that if these should hold their peace the very stones would immediately cry out." Matthew's account, on the other hand, makes the children the principal, if not the sole, participants

in this act of praise. And when the chief priests and scribes said reproachfully to Jesus, "Hearest thou what these say?" he answered in reply, "Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

It thus happened that Christ's ministry in the temple ended in an acclaim of praise from the children. It can scarcely be doubted that these praises from the little ones threw their consolatory influence far into the week of agony on which he was just then to enter; for Jesus was, of course, not only fully aware of the purport of this outburst of praise in its relation to the future of the race, but he was also personally fond of children. It is a noteworthy fact that most of the writers on Christ's relations with children discover in his treatment of them the tokens, or at least the atmospheres, of a strong personal affection. Dr. Zart in his "Charm of Jesus" goes so far as to say outright that Jesus took the little ones up, folded them in his arms, and kissed them.

V.

THE CHILD AS THE SUBJECT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.



THE CHILD AS THE SUBJECT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

From the foregoing statement of Christ's doctrine concerning children and their relation to his kingdom, it becomes perfectly clear what his will is. If it should be found that his works as expressed in the nature of the child in anywise contradict this conclusion derived from his words, there would be good grounds for rejecting the interpretation we have made of his teaching. But when this view is reënforced by his works, and also by the experience of the Church both in its failure to do much with adult populations and its success when dealing with childhood and youth, it becomes so thoroughly buttressed as to become immovable.

It is coming in this day to be allowed by the best psychologists that a man, however well developed in other departments of his being, is not an educated man unless his religious nature has also been educated. There is no more possibility of a complete and virile manhood in the relations a man sustains to the kingdom of God without a harmonious and full development of his religious faculties than there is of a corresponding place in the world of mere thought without a full intellectual training and equipment.

If we begin with those engagements of men in which the physical faculties predominate, we find that there can be no perfect work either in itself as a product, or in its effect upon the workman, without a proper training in the art to be pursued, and that no such training can be had otherwise than by a process of training, even of habituation, which begins in very early life.

When we ascend into the higher realms of the fine arts, the same thing is found to obtain. To make a first-rate musician or painter without a preparatory training in early life is ordinarily impossible, and for the largest results this training needs to be reënforced by a blood which has the tendency in it. It is now customary in preparing

for the more complex spheres of a large professional life and the life of the scholar to devote from twenty to twenty-five years to preparation therefor, and the most important part of this long period is the first part of it, because wrong habits of observation, of thought, and of self-direction acquired in childhood are almost ineradicable.

In the still higher sphere of the spirit the same law prevails, and for still higher reasons. The spirit or moral nature, to which all the under faculties are in subjection, calls, in the nature of the case, for more complex relations than any other. It touches distinctly upon two worlds, with all the relations which obtain in both. It is the sphere in which, in reality, all destiny is determined. The moral nature is also the sphere in which the greatest perversion has occurred, and in which there is to be found, therefore, the greatest weakness. For these reasons there is more need of accurateness, thoroughness, and extent in religious education than in that of any other class.

And yet it must be confessed by the most ardent

religionists that the past and present order of religious education is, in many cases, a mere travesty. It consists in the main of a small amount of desultory knowledge, and, worse than all, follows the effete tradition that knowledge is education. The little knowledge thus imparted is not well adapted, for the lack of that wisdom which makes the knowledge a mere means, the end being a strong, rich, indestructible moral or spiritual character. As a matter of fact, the most nugatory of all the forms of knowledge is moral knowledge when it fails to issue in moral character. Its one aim and end is character, and missing this it is nothing. It loses even its charm as an attainment. As the man with a large educational and literary equipment who can do nothing in the world is a failure, so the man thoroughly furnished in a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of a spiritual life without a corresponding moral character is an offense even in the eyes of men. Almost every such case is due to a failure at the point of training in the acts and thought of a moral life. It is easy to see, therefore, that a

very large and inalienable part of religious education is, indeed, the establishment of a habit of virtue, the vital transformation of a knowledge of the good into a life of goodness. One of the profoundest and most far-reaching of our Lord's sayings is this: "If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine." Any system of religious education which proposes the attainment of religious knowledge as an end, or that fails to provide that such knowledge shall be irradiated with the light which comes only from the habit of obediently and reverently following after the best, is exceedingly faulty, and must ever continue to be disappointing in its outcome.

The doctrine of human depravity, as commonly taught, has had the effect of obscuring certain other truths which are practically of much more importance. Among these is the truth that children are by nature religious. The Creator has planted the religious instinct so deep that the annihilation or even serious perversion of it requires not a little of bad training and misguidance. This endowment furnishes a vantage ground which,

taken in connection with the divine order of the family, makes possible the determination and secure establishment of the religious life before the child is separated from the home.

The two great elements of personal religion are faith and obedience. Childhood is preëminently the period of faith; not a faith to be discounted, as is often done by reason of the fact that it is childish, but a faith the purest, simplest, and most effectual known to any period of man's life. Childhood is also the time of times in the matter of obedience. The child's weakness and the parent's strength; the ignorance of the one and the knowledge of the other, together with the child's natural sense of dependence, make the establishment of the habit of obedience the easiest of all parental tasks. By the habit of obedience I do not mean the mere custom of doing the things required and abstaining from those forbidden, though in many cases that would be a beautiful achievement, but rather that condition of character in the child which leads it to refer all things easily and without conscious limitations to the will

of the parent as already expressed, or as fairly interpreted by the mind of the child.

The religious instincts or genius of the child, and the opportunity of the parents, are thus in the divine order placed so close together, and answer so easily to each other, that there is in the scheme of nature no reason for impiety in the child except the irreligion of parents. In other periods in life there may be other causes for it which parents may not wholly control or resist, but never in childhood, since the guardianship of children is as sacred a duty as are support and instruction.

But there is still another point of very great importance, touching the divine adaptation of childhood to religious life, which, though not wholly a discovery of the recent processes in the study of child life, has found great reënforcement and a much clearer statement through the scientific treatment applied to the data furnished.

Probably the last fifty years have witnessed more real study of the child than was known from the beginning of the Christian era to that time. Out of this study has come a large and varied

assortment of books dealing with the child on its physical, intellectual, and religious sides. Among these books is Dr. Starbuck's work on "The Psychology of Religion." The basis of this treatise is composed of data gathered by the scientific method and classified accordingly. A number of inquiries definitely formed were addressed to a wide range of persons, varied in nationality and domestic habitat, as well as in religious affiliation and educational advantages. The answers were given with evident care and conscientiousness. One of the most important conclusions reached by this method of inquiry was that there is at a certain period of adolescence a physiological condition which tends directly to the presentation from within of the needs of a religious life; that is, a sort of conscious crisis of life which leads to the contemplation of the more serious aspects of life and of destiny, and withal a sense of individuality, personality, and responsibility which comes so clearly without connection with any outside cause as to indicate its purely internal origin. The average age for this experience lies between

that of twelve and fourteen years. It is a noteworthy fact that this age corresponds very accurately with that at which the Jewish child was recognized in its individual relations with the Church.

Dr. Coe, who has taken similar data, in speaking on this subject, says: "The mental condition during adolescence is particularly favorable to deep religious impressions. This is the time that the child becomes competent to make a deeply personal life choice; such a choice is now easier than either before or after; this is, accordingly, the time at which a wise Church will expect to reap its chief harvest of members." He further says: "Nor is the Christian religion alone in making this age a turning point. Daniels gives a long list of religious practices, signalizing the simultaneous initiation of youths into manhood and into the mysteries and covenants of religion." He adds to the instances given by Daniels a very beautiful one to the same effect from the customs of the American Indians.

^{1&}quot; The Spiritual Life," pp. 47, 48.

Discerning men have always known that for many reasons childhood is the best time to begin the religious life, and most of what the Church has thus far achieved has been due to the following in part of Christ's teaching on this subject; but this discovery through scientific methods of a natural tendency toward the great religious ends for which men are created, cannot but quicken the interest and enlarge the intelligence of men concerning the value of this period. This discovery ought to be of very great service to parents and other teachers in interpreting the moods of children and in giving definite direction to their thought.

In connection with this conclusion of Dr. Starbuck's as to the age of the religious impulse, it should be noted that it does not stand at all against the most painstaking training of children in religion from their earliest years, provided that training be thoroughly rational, that is, in harmony with the child's power of intelligence and the simple demands of its nature. Indeed, there is still room left for a specific inquiry into

the experiences at that age, or state of adolescence of those who have been thus normally trained, and consequently adjusted in a large measure beforehand to the peculiar impulsions of that stage of life.

There are some who object to this scientific treatment of the religious nature on the ground that it reduces the subject to the plain of the naturalistic and possibly the materialistic. But nothing is further from the truth. Indeed, there is real strengthening of the claims of religion when the subject is considered from that standpoint. It certainly does not heighten the supernatural aspects of religion to prove that man was so constructed originally, or so affected by the fall, that there is not in the race any constitutional demand for religion, or inherent impulse toward it. The response of man's nature to the external and supernatural provisions which the Christian religion furnishes is one of the finest confirmations of the divine origin of it. It furnishes the strongest demonstration that the Creator of man is also the author of man's religion. Ignorance of this inward tendency and its periods of manifestation surely does not heighten the qualification of those who have guardianship over children for dealing with the religious problem.

But the existence of the religious faculty, and the impulses toward a religious life which spring out of it, are not enough. There has been too much dependence upon these mere fundamental facts, and hitherto entirely too little care given to the early, continuous, and harmonious development of this faculty into a well-rounded and wholesome religious character. As the existence of intellectual faculties and their varied impulses does not take away the necessity for the most careful and continuous training from the very beginning of life in order to the production of a great intellectual character, so in the spiritual realm the existence of this faculty and the signs which it gives of its presence in mighty religious impulses is a chief ground for such a treatment of the religious faculties as is usually bestowed upon the intellect.

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THE EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION RECOGNIZED.

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THE EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION RECOGNIZED.

WHETHER there is any complete salvation, either of the individual or the race, otherwise than by education, is a subject well worth the attention of the modern Church. In the consideration of it there are two prejudices which stand in the way of a full discovery of the truth. One of these is based upon a popular misapprehension of what is meant by the phrase, "salvation by education." It is sometimes interpreted to mean that by the full and harmonious development of the intellectual faculties men will be led so to see and love the truth as to be brought thereby into harmony with the divine purpose, and to be saved from the errors and sins of an immoral life. If this were the meaning of the terms, it would be well for the Church to resist that view with all proper vigor; for it has been demonstrated again and again that merely intellectual education, however high and broad, will not save men in the spiritual sense. That it will do so is not the meaning of these terms. The strongest advocate which the last century had of the educational process of saving men was Horace Bushnell; and perhaps the strongest in our own country in this century thus far are Drs. Hall, Coe, Starbuck, Haslett, Du Bois, etc. Surely neither of these has held that any process of merely intellectual development, however correct and elaborate, can save the souls of men from sin.

The other idol is of a much more formidable character. It has appearances and traditions in its favor, and an enthronement in the policies and literature of the Church. It is what has already been mentioned as the rupture theory of salvation, or the doctrine of adult conversion, against which, in the case of any who have already become adult without being saved, no one has aught to say; but against which as a theory for the action of the Church in its efforts to save the race

there is much to be said; much more, indeed, than the scope of this discussion will allow.

"It has been the misfortune of the Church," says Coe, "to form its conception of humanity from adult members of the race, and to conceive of the process of salvation under the limitations thus resulting." And it must be confessed that there are ostensibly strong grounds for such a conception. In the first place, the adult race is the race as it is, however much it may differ from the race as it ought to be and may be made to become under changed conditions. Then it is a plain fact in Church history that Christ and his immediate disciples addressed themselves to an adult generation. This example was followed, or the same thing done for similar reasons, by the apostles and even by the fathers, except that in the latter case a catechumenical order was also included. But even in this it is probable that the children and youth were put upon food more adapted to adults than to persons of tender age. Herein two very destructive errors originated: one was the notion that the Church could reach and save a grown-up generation; and the other, that a statement of doctrine aimed at the conversion of adults could be made effectual in the training of children. The influence of these errors has been enlarged by the fact that they stood in their origin so close to the first sources of Church history. There has since been added their long and supposedly honorable history, which, coupled with their origin, seems to have endowed them with a sort of immortality.

Students of the problem of religious education sometimes overlook a fact which if properly recognized becomes a chief argument in favor of the position which they seek to establish. The fact referred to is that nearly all of what the Church has achieved thus far has been accomplished by the use of the educational process.

It is almost beyond doubt that the order of instruction prevailing in the Jewish Church was carried with suitable modifications into the first movements of the Christian Church. We have in Luke's writings two intimations of this, which, when considered in connection with the preëx-

isting custom in this regard, make the case quite clear. The first of these is the statement in Luke i. 4. Here Luke, in declaring to Theophilus his reasons for addressing the treatise to him, says: "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." Both the situation and the words used in the original indicate that this instruction was in a regular course of truth, ministered either privately by some chosen tutor or in a class being taught in the things of Christ. The second instance is the statement in Acts xviii. 25, that Apollos was a "man instructed in the way of the Lord." The absence in his case of the deeper spiritual knowledge of Christ's way, and of Christian baptism, indicates that he had been instructed in the teaching of John the Baptist concerning Jesus, probably by some disciple of John, and that he had also been instructed in the historic side of the life of Christ. If so, Apollos was in a peculiar sense a connecting link between the two dispensations and the two orders of teaching. When it is said that Aquila and Priscilla took him unto

them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly, it is not to be inferred that this exposition was the work of an hour or of a single occasion, but rather that it was a course of instruction, and most probably of induction into the experience of a truly spiritual life. The difference between Apollos at Ephesus and Apollos in Achaia is quite marked.

It must here be noted that at that period the Church, while not neglecting the Jews in any place, was addressing itself chiefly to the unconverted millions of the Gentile world. Those millions were, in the nature of the case, mostly adults at first; and consequently the course of instruction had to be adapted to such, rather than to those of tender years. It seems fairly clear that at this point the Church fell into an economic error from which it has not yet been delivered—the error of feeding the lambs on the food of the sheep. At any rate, it stands sufficiently established that the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles saw the introduction of an order of religious schools for the teaching of uninstructed

adults and children, by which, probably more than by all other means, Christianity spread in the second and third centuries till its nominal membership was almost commensurate with the population of the Roman Empire. In this connection Dr. Philip Schaff, in his "History of the Christian Church," calls attention to the fact that from the days of the apostles till the opening of the Middle Ages no names of great missionaries are mentioned, and that there were no missionary societies from that time till after the coming of the Nicene Age.

Much light is thrown upon the work of the Church in this period, and the results accruing, by two facts. The first of these is that the foremost minds of the Church, both among preachers and teachers, regarded this employment of teaching, which was largely catechising the young, as a chief work from which the greatest and most learned need not, did not, turn. The second fact is that the most prominent and formidable enemies of early Christianity regarded the teaching of the young as the greatest power for the spread

of the doctrine of Christ—and the thing, therefore, chiefly to be resisted.

Celsus, in the second century, the first writer against Christianity whose work is extant, laid it as an accusation against the Church that it was teaching Christianity to the children of the empire without consent and without the right to do so; while in the fourth century the edict of the Emperor Julian, the apostate, by which the schools of the empire were to be taken into the control of the state, was intended to shut the Christian teachers out from the schools, and thus make an end of this victorious influence. The results of this teaching work are thus brought to light by the estimate in which it was held by the most enlightened friends, and the most powerful enemies of Christianity. Julian himself was the better prepared to attack the great citadel because of the inside view he had obtained of its uses and its usefulness in the establishment of the Christian faith and life.

It is scarcely to be questioned that the net increase of the modern Church is chiefly due to

a growth from within. It is altogether probable that the growth from without, that is, from the non-Christian classes, is more than negatived by the losses through death and by lapses; so that the real increment is from that element brought in in childhood, or prepared in childhood for the step subsequently taken. The trouble lies in this, that a reliance upon the plan of adult conversion has stood in the way to prevent an unreserved and universal use of the method by Christian nurture. The believer himself, converted at an adult age, if realizing at all the need of bringing up his family in a religious way, has at best contradicted the true and only divinely appointed method by bringing his children up for a future conversion. In this way there has come to be a succession of religious guides who habitually look to a period beyond childhood as the period for the beginning of a religious life, and of children into whose education has been incorporated the false and fatal notion that they must wait for a certain maturity before they can virtuously consider the question of all questions, that of a spiritual life.



VII. THE EDUCATION OF WHAT?



VII.

THE EDUCATION OF WHAT?

ALL true education, whether bodily, intellectual, or spiritual, is a process of development from within. There is a necessary and accompanying process which is too often mistaken for education. That process is one of feeding for the body, instruction for the intellect, and indoctrination, which is somewhat more than instruction, for the spirit. In all these respects the pupil must be fed with suitable food both as to kind and quantity, but the availability of that contribution which has its origin from without depends upon the action of the faculties which belong to the living organism. The necessary elements of all healthful development are atmosphere, food, and exercise. It scarcely need be said that there must be a vital organism to do the breathing, the eating, and to put forth, either consciously or unconsciously, the effort. In physical development the

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body is the vital entity; in intellectual education, the mental faculties; and in spiritual education, what?

It is quite easy to answer that in religious education the religious faculties are the vital organism. But what is the state of these faculties? Is the education of these faculties the mere development of man's moral nature with all its depraved tendencies? Or, is it a gradual eradication of these tendencies, a sort of progressive new birth by human agencies? Or, is it a merely negative work, that is, one of the repression of the evil growth? It is probable that the masters of theology and of pedagogics would alike avoid each of the horns of this trilemma; the first two, as being out of harmony with a correct theology, and the last, with educational science.

As this is not a theological discussion, I shall not enter far into the question of human depravity; and yet it stands so closely related to the problem of religious education that it cannot be wholly omitted.

I sincerely believe in the fall of man, and that

thereby evil tendencies came to be so much a part of human nature as to demand a divine remedy. It has been commonly taught that the offspring of Adam are, by virtue of their relation to him, wholly deprayed. It is possible that in considering the signs upon which this judgment is made up too much is ascribed to that remote ancestor and not enough to those who are nearer. Whatever may be the true theory, the practical troubles from which we suffer are not due so much to Adam as to the Adamses; that is, to those just back of us whose personal impulses we feel in our own blood and by whose neglect or leadership we have reached our present status. But whether this depravity be partial or entire, whether it be wholly ascribable to Adam or distributable to our intervening ancestry, it is an awful fact for which a divine remedy is provided in Jesus Christ. That this remedy is adequate, no Christian ever questions. He knows its efficacy and its divine amplitude. The question of supreme interest is not the old one of sin and its cure, that is settled; but rather one of the time and

method for the application of that remedy in order that it may be most effectual. The doctrine of the Christian system is that the recovery is possible only by a divine regeneration. There is no system of training or regenerative influence that can supersede this order. It were as easy to produce wheat from the seed of tares by an elaborate process of cultivation as to develop an acceptable religious character without the implanting of the divine life principle in the human heart. This much assured, the question follows as to when and on what conditions this divine act passes upon the human spirit and makes it a new creature.

In the case of the adult, or fully responsible person, the conditions are plainly repentance toward God and faith in Christ. However varied may be the experience of such, there is one thing common to all, that is, that no man ever repented for Adam's transgression or exercised faith in Christ that he might be saved from the evil consequence of deeds done by any ancestor, even the one nearest of kin. The burden of every

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penitent heart is its own transgressions of the divine law, and in the act of faith the immaculate Saviour is seen wholly in relation to the personal sins and sinfulness of the penitent. But when we turn from the adult to the child, the situation is wholly different.

Just here a question of very great importance arises, a satisfactory settlement of which would throw much light on the situation. The question is, whether or not God, in view of the redeeming work of Christ, is at liberty without further conditions to apply to the race the benefits of the atonement in so far as they are to affect the state of man in relation to the fall? In other words, as the race inherits its evil nature from Adam, is the Creator in a position through the work of Christ to countervail those evil conditions by a divine act, known as the new birth? Is there any reason to the contrary in the case of infants? There are several considerations which seem to favor it. The idea of "federal headship" calls for it. May it not be true here, as at the point of physical life after death, "that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"? There is no community in Christendom that does not believe in the salvation of those who die in infancy. It must be granted that in that event they are entirely fitted by nature for this transition, or are so affected by the divine power through the atonement as to become fitted for the heavenly kingdom. If a child who is to grow up in the companionship of the redeemed and of angels needs this regeneration, how much more do those children need it who are to grow up amid the adverse conditions of the sinful world? And if God is at liberty to perform this great renewing or preparing act in behalf of those who are to die, what hinders it in the case of those who are to live?

It will be recalled in this connection that a very large and intelligent part of the Christian Church believes in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; that is, that when parents perform their part to a covenant by dedicating their children to God in baptism, God on his part gives the little ones the blessing which the baptism symbolizes, namely,

the washing of regeneration. For men in certain situations this is a very beautiful doctrine, but one trouble is that it implies that the children of negligent and irreligious parents are bound to very hard conditions for which they are not responsible, and that God is thus bound to too small and uncertain a sphere in the performance of one of his most important acts in behalf of man. If God were to be limited in this great movement by any special time or occasion in which others than himself and the child have a part, surely none were more appropriate than that which is found in the use of the incomparably beautiful and solemn sacrament of infant baptism. But for whatever reason a child may be regenerated in baptism, it may be regenerated at some other time. The parental performance has value in it for the future of the child only because the parents thus commit themselves to the training of it in the nurture of God. The act itself has certainly nothing in it which clears the way for God to do for that child that which needs to be done in the case of all children, sooner or later.

If it be asked how it happens that in the event of the spiritual renewal of children they afterwards fall into evil ways, the answer is, that such renewal cannot do more for man than to restore him to his primeval condition and relation to God. This was exactly the kind of man who was the first to fall away and to "bring sin into the world and all our woe." Not only so, but from Adam's situation must be subtracted that vast sinful order in the midst of which his posterity has thus far been compelled to live. It requires but a small stretch of the imagination to see that if Adam, although created absolutely pure in nature, had had a boyhood surrounded by the kind of boys who encompass almost all the children who have sprung from him, together with the bad example of his seniors and the atmospheres of an unchristian home, his liability to fall would have been greatly increased. If, therefore, it be granted that all children are divinely renewed at the beginning of their lives, it is still not to be wondered at if under the misguidance, the neglect, and the intimate temptations of our sinful order they fall

away, and thus efface the divine image even as Adam did. If it be asked, What is the spiritual status of such as thus depart from God? the answer is, It is a fallen estate just as Adam's was. And what is the remedy? Renewal by the power of God on the conditions of repentance and faith as given in the gospel for adult transgressors.

If it be true that God renews men in their infancy, there can be no necessity for their falling away. A system of truly Christian nurture, in harmony with the demands of the word of God and the laws of moral being, will bring them to the time and state of full personal accountability, fortified by all the experiences of the home and school and by a thoroughgoing habit of virtue.

There is another view of this subject which deserves at least to be here stated. I refer to the one propounded by Dr. Bushnell. In his doctrine of the organic unity of the family, he holds that the child is not wholly born when it comes into a separate physical existence; that the other elements of its nature, the intellectual and spiritual, are just then beginning to be born; that for the

fuller birth of these faculties the child is still in the matrix of the family; and that out of the atmosphere, example, and instruction of the home the child is brought to full birth. This doctrine of the organic unity of the family undoubtedly contains a great truth and one which operates very largely in the direction which Dr. Bushnell describes. The acceptance of it in this day, when the tendency, just as in his own day, is toward a too unrestrained, unmodified, individualism, would work out the most wholesome results in family life and in the after relations of society. But if the import of his doctrine is that the new or spiritual birth, though coming from God, comes by or through the channels of family life and influence, it is questionable whether this is not at last only a removal of the great event somewhat further forward in the life of the child; and whether also it does not, as in the case of baptismal regeneration, leave the neediest children, or those who are without religious or dutiful parents, out of the account.

But whatever may be the conclusion as to a

universal renewal of men in their infancy, one thing is sure, and that is that God is present with the child and in the child. He is the source of its religious impulses. He reigns in the conscience and vitalizes what truth the child is taught or derives from intuition. He is present in the functions of the Holy Spirit to exert every possible gracious influence for the development of the good and the eradication of the evil. He begets in the child the impulse toward himself, and then says to those in authority over it: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

If we assume that that which is to be developed in the child is the spiritual life divinely implanted in him by an act of renewal, or initial life, or initial salvation, we have no difficulty in fixing upon a plan of training which is truly educational. The aim of religious education then becomes the development of the individuality into a completed spiritual personality, by processes which are normal, and which correspond with those observed in all the other kingdoms of life.

In concluding this chapter, it may be well to remark that no claim of originality is made for the suggestion it contains as to the work of the Divine Spirit upon the moral nature of the child and its effect in solving one of the main difficulties in the problem of religious education. Many good and great men, some of them writers of large ability, have held and promulgated the doctrine of the divine qualification of infants for membership in the kingdom of heaven. Especially has this been true in the Methodist school of thought. John Fletcher, of Madeley, taught explicitly the doctrine of initial life or salvation; F. G. Hibbard, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, wrought out an elaborate scriptural and rational argument in favor of universal renewal in infancy; and Dr. Leo Rosser, one of the great revivalists of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, issued a volume of similar import.

VIII. THE CHURCH AND THE HOME.



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THE Church is the chief instrument through which the Holy Spirit is to achieve all the ends for which Jesus Christ came among men. These ends, however wide and varied they may be as found in society and in national life or civilizations, are all included in the one notion of Christian character. Without going into a discussion of this theme which might easily fill a volume, I may say in a word that Christian character is Christlikeness in all the imitable qualities revealed in the character and life of Jesus. Again, without undertaking to discuss the Church, I would say that the Church, in so far as it is one with the kingdom of God, consists (1) of all the children of the race who have not reached the age or conditions of moral independence, or who, having reached such conditions, have not voluntarily or wickedly departed from God; and (2) of all of

any age who have faith in Jesus Christ and are obediently following the law of God and subjecting themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the one great end of perfecting Christian character in themselves and others.

Despite the imperfections of the Church which in every age have sprung out of the human elements in it, the Holy Spirit has through its instrumentality brought about that miracle of miracles, the transformation of a large part of the race from savagery to civilization. If the Church as a mere human organization had attempted to forge its way along this path of immense resistance, it would have failed destructively; but as an organ of the Holy Spirit, it has quickened the intellect of man, recast his emotional nature, strengthened and redirected his will in such wise as to have produced all that goodness in the world, both within the Church and outside of it, which differentiates the Christian man from the barbarian, and marks those vast moral expanses which lie between Christendom and heathendom.

The Church as the instrument of the Holy

Spirit in the production of Christian character, when acting normally, works at once in two chief spheres, the evangelical and the educational. The evangelical sphere may be defined sufficiently for the present purpose as that in which by the use of the word of God, especially in the preaching of it, the Church seeks the conversion of transgressors and the upbuilding of believers. The educational field, while aiming at the same fruits in a somewhat different way, is broader and more complex, and demands a survey in particular of at least two of its included institutions, namely, the Christian home and the Sunday school.

Let it be remarked, first of all, that the Church of Christ is fundamentally an educational institution. This is true even in regard to its most thoroughly evangelical work. The fruits of a thousand revivals have been largely thrown away by a failure to apprehend this truth, the citizenship of the kingdom becoming impoverished, and not infrequently decimated, for lack of the educational order from the point of conversion onward. It has already been said that the object for which

the Church exists is the development of Christian character. When in this connection we regard the fact that a complete religious character is no more possible without the education of the spiritual faculties than is a right intellectual character without due cultivation, we realize the importance of giving to the educational function of the Church its proper place, and of carefully studying the institutions and the methods by which this end may be best achieved.

The Church is by divine appointment the special guardian of the childhood of the race, and is, therefore, charged with the conception and operation of proper plans for the religious education of the young life committed to it. Foremost among the agencies for this end is the home. In the outset God made the home the chief sphere of religious training, and there the very scheme of nature holds it by conditions which cannot be dissolved.

The Christian home was founded by Jesus Christ. Some of the elements were already present in the Jewish home, but there the divine order

in the establishment of the family had been much perverted. Jesus cleared the home of bigamy and polygamy, which had prevailed with such desolating results; and of divorce, which doubtless in many cases then as now was but a sort of progressive polygamy; and he also freed the home from certain Jewish traditions relating to the treatment of parents which had worked a thoroughgoing contradiction of the laws of nature and of God.

Outside of the Jewish commonwealth the state of the home was even worse. The Greeks and Romans, the best and greatest of the outside nations, had been working at various problems on the obverse or Gentile side of religious life and civilization. Among both, the home was almost nothing. Marriage was, when at all respected, exceedingly loose. Woman was degraded, sometimes splendidly, but none the less truly; and children were much despised and neglected; while the strongest and best nen among them were lax both in their doctrines and doings concerning the marriage relation and those sa-

cred duties which belong by nature to the human home.

The Christian home, by its original constitution and the teaching of Christ, rests upon the one foundation of monogamic marriage; that is, marriage with one husband or one wife at a time. This union, according to Jesus, is for life. The violation of the seventh commandment is the only capital crime against the estate and the only ground of its lawful dissolution. Even then the offending party to the union is put under disabilities which, if not absolutely lifelong, last at least as long as the life of the innocent party. This is the only Christian law on the subject of divorce, and ought to be the universal law of Christian civilizations. The fact of divorce ought to signify the one cause of divorce, then lawful separations for other causes deemed sufficient by the state could be so used as a police or protective measure as to prevent those disastrous results which are constantly accruing to the social body by the divorce habit. The Christian family proper is impossible with divorce in view. That

view vitiates the fundamental notion of Christian marriage. With so unstable a foundation, it is impossible that the superstructure should be secure. Laws made for the accommodation of the lawless are a seminary of vice. Their influence is far-reaching into realms for which they are not by their terms intended. When the thought of divorce pervades a community, it disqualifies many young married people for that wholesome process of self-restraints, concessions, and mutual helpfulness so necessary in order to the perfection of the estate; it also disqualifies unmarried young people for a proper consideration of the relation, and they, therefore, enter it under fatal misconceptions. But the chief burden of this kind of social order falls heaviest at last upon the most innocent of all, the children in the household; for while they themselves may become the bond which prevents an actual rupture and consequent destruction of the home, they are at best deprived of that security which is produced only by a thoroughly Christian view of marriage and the home.

A Christian family consists of a Christian fa-

ther, a Christian mother, and of a child or children who are Christ's at first, and who may remain his under proper guidance and culture.

The conditions of a successful religious parenthood are neither numerous nor complex. It is divinely so arranged in order that even parents with small gifts, meager acquisitions, and with most limited appointments, may yet exercise this triumphant influence without which all may go wrong.

I. The first condition is that parents shall be what they seem; and very closely allied with this is the matter of seeming what they are, or of making such an exhibit of what they believe and feel as that the children shall have a sufficiently clear and full revelation of the character of the parents. The sphinx is not a household figure.

It is next to impossible to fool children. Their discernment is truly wonderful. Even infants can perceive the difference between the fussy pretender and the genuine lover of children. There is absolutely no sphere in which sincerity and a wise candor are more demanded than in dealing

with childhood. As the possession of the confidence of children is necessary in order to a very large influence over them, the destruction of it by a lack of genuineness is fatal to all the high purposes of family life. Parents may prescribe for their children the best course of moral and religious conduct, and may for a time procure conformity to it, even when they themselves are not personally bound by it; but in order to make discipline and instruction truly vital and of permanent and of sure effect, there must be the utmost sincerity and the fullest conformity to the demands of the law of righteousness. A deep and reverent love of all that is good and a rightly displayed aversion to all that is evil have within themselves an educational influence which it would be difficult to limit. But these qualities cannot be successfully feigned.

2. A second condition is that the parents shall recognize their own place as one in relation to God. They hold their place by a divine order as expressed in nature, and this alone has led many untutored and heathen parents to seek for their

children what was conceived to be the highest moral and religious good. But this is not enough, and is by no means all. The Christian parent who undertakes to work out the family problem from the standpoint of the merely natural, as a mere educational process, will fail to achieve the highest end. The divine imperative must control in the life of the parent and in his relations with the child. No father has the right of government because he is stronger than the child, nor even because he is wiser. He derives it directly from God first through the scheme of nature and then by direct ordination to a higher office than that of the parent. He is charged in a sense with priestly power, and is appointed to carry out a plan of religious development, the very processes of which are given in the law of God.

3. A third condition is that the parents shall place a proper value upon the child. In so-called Christian homes there are millions of children with misshapen lives only because other things have been placed in the forefront while the chil-

dren have suffered a fatal neglect through undervaluation. Whenever the claims of business or of society are allowed to have precedence, the ship drifts and breakers are often reached before they are even feared. The child in the home is above every other earthly interest, and only those who recognize this truth and feel the weight of it are safe guides.

4. A fourth condition is that parents shall be watchful. God has set men in families in order that the household may have the support and protection of one parent and the constant guardianship of the other. There are upbuilding processes to go on within; and there is the exclusion of hurtful forces from without. Neither of these ends can be fully accomplished except through the family, and only there when the parents are on the alert from the beginning to train the good and keep far the evil which seeks to enter. There are not a few parents who would take every precaution to protect a field of grain, making the fence, as the energetic and unequivocal language of an old law has it, "pig tight, horse high, and

bull strong," who will without compunction allow the family fences to be broken down until the home field is trodden over and destroyed by the feet of aliens—strangers to the purposes for which alone the home has a right to exist.

5. A final condition to be maintained is that of the companionship of parents and children. The term companionship as used in this relation must be taken with much care. First of all, it must not be understood to imply equality. Indeed, true companionship never implies equality as an essential condition. In the relations of parents and children above all others must this notion be excluded. We have seen parents who were claiming to make companions of their children, when in fact they were making them petty bosses, pert prigs, who had gotten only the notion of equality which ever and anon would pass into a sense of superiority, and thus show itself not only in the family relations but also in spheres beyond. This is not companionship. It does not even resemble it. The truest companionship may exist between a master and servant, between a teacher and pupil,

but on both sides it rests upon a recognized superiority of the one over the other. Christ the Infinite called his uncultured and slow-hearted disciples "friends"; and they had toward him a sense of fellowship which they placed above every other possession, even above life itself. Some of the finest companionships ever known among men were found in the old South between masters and mistresses and their slaves. They rested on ineradicable inequalities in many directions; but they rested on the sure foundation of respect, regard for great personal qualities, reverence, and a thoroughly inbred sense of the relations to be sustained. Companionship is not even a question of agreement in opinions, but an agreement of spirits. It follows, therefore, that there may be considerable intimacy of association without any true companionship.

In the case of parents and children there should be a clear recognition of the superiority of the one and the proper subordination of the other. This recognition, however, needs to be one of sense and not of statute. Parents who regard the

fact that their children are born into rights which are as sacred as those of themselves will readily adjust all associations with an eye to the right development rather than the repression of their children, through the means of personal association with them. Children, on the other hand, will readily respond to this dignification of their lot and relations, and will constantly rejoice in the sense of an unfolding manhood and womanhood. They will thus be subject not to the law only of their parents, but to the whole range of their personal influence and force of character. It is only in this way that parents can prevent a partial isolation of their children from them, and cut short the many evil consequences which are likely to flow from such a position. It will also be found in every case that a rightly ordered companionship will deepen rather than destroy the reverence of children for their parents; indeed, there is no other means of so effectually inspiring and perfecting it.

The highest form of companionship has been described as the sharing of life. This implies the

full, natural, hearty participation of all the members of the household in all the concerns of the family life. It means not only that the children shall be admitted into the fellowship of its work, but that parents shall enter sympathetically into its recreations and diversions. Otherwise it will be impossible for the parents and children properly to understand each other, for the reason that it is only in the real and hearty engagements of life that a right understanding of personal qualities can be had. With such a companionship children grow up naturally and normally; they are without prudish reserve; they place their full confidence in their parents instead of unworthily bestowing it elsewhere; they have a fuller sense of the honor of the home, and a truer love for it. In other words, they thus realize themselves as full members of the family, seek their chief enjoyments within it, and become subject to the influence of their parents to a degree not possible by any other means. No matter, therefore, what parents may give their children in the way of opportunities and equipments, they have fallen far short of giving their best unless they give withal their companionship, for this is in the best sense the gift of themselves.

The family contribution to all forms of education is great and permanent. No man whose childhood has been passed in a home characterized by ignorance and coarseness ever wholly recovers from the effects. These evils, being in the atmosphere and breathed by the young life, become in a sense constitutional. Such persons may, it is true, become learned and establish correct habits of thinking, but they will bear both scars and weaknesses from which there is no absolute recovery. In like manner the educated and refined home makes a correspondingly indelible impression for good upon the tone and quality of one's after intellectual life. The best grammar school is correct speech in the household, not only in the mere matter of speaking properly, but in the readiness and fullness with which the pupil grasps the philosophy of language and conforms to its demands. There is no trained teacher who cannot feel, through a sort of sensus vagus, the

intellectual atmosphere which the pupil carries with him out of the home from which he comes.

What is true of the influence of the home in ordinary educational matters is more especially and extensively true in the development of religious character. The reason for this lies in the fact that many of the questions about which religious education is conversant are directly connected with all the real life relationships; so that looks, words, deeds are constantly contributing to the creation of the child's ideals, and above all are unconsciously determining what shall be its controlling spirit.

In all this process nothing is of greater importance than what may be called the spirit of the family. There are many households in which a kind of religious order is kept up, but from which the outcome is by no means satisfactory. If a careful inquiry be made, it will probably be found that the so-called religious elements are killed in effect by the prevailing spirit of the household. It not infrequently happens that the religious life of the family is only nominal, while the worldly

spirit there is real and vital. On the other hand, it sometimes happens that the religious order is, in so far as performances go, exceedingly meager, and yet the prevailing spirit is genuine and true to religious principle.

The spirit of the family is chiefly determined by the parents. Sometimes there is a conflict of spirits, the father holding one way and the mother another. We have seen, for example, a family being reared by a sweet-spirited, courageous, devoted mother, while the father's relation was rather that of a preferred boarder, and his presence seemed largely to throw a chill into an atmosphere of reverence and piety which the mother was giving her life to create. There are other cases where the father is a man of true devotion. and does all he can for the religious development of the children, while the mother is a worldlyminded, ambitious, scheming spirit, counteracting somewhat, if not wholly, the good influences of the father. There are still other cases where both parents are one in aim and spirit; sometimes the wrong spirit, and sometimes the right. When

both are wrong, then, almost of course, the family is wrong; but when both are right, the family will almost certainly be a unit in the love and advancement of things that are good. It is of prime importance, therefore, that parents shall determine what is to be the prevailing spirit in the household. It is needless to talk about any successful religious culture in a home where the dominant spirit is one of worldliness. It is almost impossible but that children nartured in such an atmosphere shall be selfish and worldly. They will from the outset breathe in a notion of life which will make it very difficult for them in any school of after life to unlearn what the parents have so thoroughly taught.

The ideal state is one in which both parents are truly religious, and so lade the atmosphere of the home life with cleanness of thought, loftiness of purpose, unselfishness of spirit, reverence for God and the things that are God's, love of man and love of truth, that it will be natural for the children to be of the same mind and follow in the same paths. Such a home is God's chosen field

for the cultivation of those social and spiritual graces which make life beautiful and majestic, whether it be lived under the limitations of poverty and disease or amidst the splendors of a high social position.

In almost every so-called Christian community there are to be found four classes of homes: those that are positively vicious; those which are neglectful of all religious concerns; those which teach religion in an inadequate or wrong way; and those which may be designated truly as wellordered religious households. As to parents who are clearly vicious or utterly neglectful of the religious welfare of their children, I have for the present only this to say: that the crime of bringing children into this world, which must of course be without their consent, and then using the almost irresistible influence of parenthood to pervert and wreck their moral life and destiny, is one so enormous and extraordinary that it stands in a category of its own. If it be true that it were better for one who offends (misleads) one of these little ones that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were cast into the depth of the sea, of what order of condemnation shall he be accounted worthy who leads his own dependent, trustful, imitative, helpless offspring into the double damnation of this life and of that which is to come?

But there are many homes in which there is a somewhat fixed impression that the performance of certain religious acts is due, and propitiatory. There is, however, a divorcement of religion from all things else—a kind of isolation which implies counter position. Religion is not like anything else, and is not vitally related to anything else. Thanks are given in tones and terms which are not only thankless but aweinspiring. The Sabbath is made irksome, family devotions somber, and religious themes repellent to young life. This order of home has bred much infidelity and bad living on the part of those reared within it, and religion has had to bear the blame of this ignorance or folly. There is no need of this. It is partly due, perhaps, to a lack of insight and partly to a lack of true religion. The Sabbath, when rightly understood and used in harmony with Christ's doctrine of it, can be made the happiest and most helpful day of all the week to a family of even robust and alert children. The Bible, in the hands of any man who can read fairly well and who is truly appreciative, can be made the most interesting book to be found in any household; while the subjection of all the affairs of life to the domination of a right religious spirit, on the part of the parents, seasons all engagements with a salt that is felt to be saving, and in which young life loves to trust. Man loves to feel himself as being under the wings of the Infinite; and this is never more true than in the earlier stages of life, when the consciousness is wide open to the touch of influences which are none the less real because they are invisible.

The well-ordered Christian home may be defined briefly as one in which both parents are truly religious; in which there is a proper valuation of the child; in which the atmosphere is one of vital piety; and where the methods of religious instruction are adapted to the demands of child life.

IX.

THE CHILD IN THE HOME.



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More than forty millions of babies come into the world every year. Despite their differences of size and complexion, they are in the main much alike. They are alike in their weakness and their wants. They are creatures of sensation. They have a low form of consciousness, the seat of which is the stomach. They want something—they know not what; but they know when they get it, and let others know when they do not. Then in full satisfaction of this simple want they sleep and become refreshed for still larger demands until each seems to be a mere appetite wrapped in possibilities.

Much as these tiny millions are alike, there is in each a point at which it becomes utterly unlike all the others. Each has its own individuality or selfhood. It has also a power of appeal to at least two persons which no other one of the millions has. The parents of each babe recognize its peculiarity, and feel its superiority to all others of its kind. Parenthood is God's method of measuring out to man a true sense of the value of every child. The babe in the home is by no means humanity in the abstract. It is humanity especially relationed and positioned for having its true measure taken. This situation serves the double purpose of securing in the best way the sustenance and guardianship of the child itself and of creating a standard for the right valuation of all human beings. In saying this, I am assuming the presence of a civilized and considerate parenthood, which unfortunately in many cases does not exist. Indeed, the most humiliating reflection connected with human existence is that so many of these little ones are doomed to come into this new, strange, hostile world as unwelcomed visitors. They are thus destined to a place of mere tolerance until by their only appeal, that of their helplessness, they win for themselves a love which ought to have been poured upon them from the first with that divine lavishness with which the sunlight falls upon the flowers. If this were true exclusively, or even chiefly, of the children of illegitimate parents, it were bad enough; but there are thousands of homes of competence, some of them homes of splendor, and not a few which are called Christian homes, where the coming of children is regarded as a calamity. The little ones are thus victimized by being born into homes where the atmospheres are chilling, if not positively hostile. Probably the greatest task of the Church of the future is to teach men the true doctrine of parenthood, and thus to clear it of those savage elements involved in the view of life just mentioned.

After a little while the babe passes out of what seemed to be a merely physical life. The signs of intelligence begin to reveal themselves, and with this the problem deepens and the interest heightens. Still each newcomer has everything to learn *de novo*. Each must learn for himself that fire burns, that pins stick, that there is some kind of definite relation between the tails of dogs and their mouths, of cats and their claws, that floors

are hard, that even in the case of tender infants there is no exception to the law of gravitation, and that if they would get the mastery of their nurses and parents they must begin early.

It may be presumed also that the parents, even though young and inexperienced, are likewise learning certain elementary lessons at this juncture, though as a rule they are not as apt as are the children. Among the things they are supposed to learn are these: that infants eat nothing except what others give them; that being yet without speech they have no way of allowing their wants to become known except by restlessness and fretting; that crying for lack of food or from pains which food or some other physical condition has caused, and the exhibition of some will power upon the strength and right direction of which the future manhood is to depend, are not signs of any inborn moral depravity. things may, on the other hand, be often rightly interpreted as signs of carelessness or ignorance on the part of those who have the little ones in charge. But there is another lesson to be learned

here or hereabout which is of the greatest importance, and that is, that a child, in following the impulses that arise out of its natural wants, may within the first few years of its existence gain a supremacy over its parents which, growing with its growth, may finally determine the order of its own life and largely that of the household. In many cases the child in that period enters upon a life of uncontrolled or undirected sensation, and follows it through to the end. There is a time-honored adage which says that those who rock the cradle rule the world. It is also true that those who rule the cradle rock the world. The time to provide for the right adjustment of grown-up life to the relations which it must take on is not after maturity, but in infancy and early childhood; and the common mistake is not in beginning too early, but too late.

With the dawn of intelligence comes the era of lisping and learning to talk, with all its vast significance—an era of danger, when the child becomes so interesting as a mere plaything that it is liable to be construed into nothing more se-

rious or capable until it is too late fully to amend. It was upon this stage of child life that Victor Hugo seized to express his estimate of humanity. He says: "The most sublime psalm that can be heard on this earth is the lisping of a human soul from the lips of childhood. This confused murmur of thought, which is as yet only instinct, holds a strange, unreasoning appeal to eternal justice; perchance it is a protest against life while standing on the threshold—a protest unconscious, yet heartrending. This ignorance smiling at infinity lays upon all creation the burden of the destiny which shall be offered to this feeble, unarmed creature. If unhappiness comes, it seems like a betrayal of confidence. The babble of an infant is more and less than speech: it is not measured, and yet it is a song; not syllables, and yet a language—a murmur that began in heaven and will not finish on earth: it commenced before human birth, and will continue in the sphere beyond."

A little later comes the time for the beginning of what we call the education of the child. At

the first only the A, B, C's, and then follow the long years of school life, each as long to the child as a decade to a man. When one meets on the streets thousands of children and youth of all ages, each bearing his burden of books and other invisible burdens which only childhood knows, one is depressed with the reflection that each individual of the present and the oncoming millions must go through this same experience of books and desks, of confinement within walls and of discipline, of study often followed by painful failure, of misunderstandings and reconciliations, of groundless hopes and chilled ambitions, and of all the varied experiences that make up the history of childhood in school days. The child of the great scholar and the child of the unlettered artisan must start at the same point. The accumulated wisdom of the ages means much for the man, but little for the child. The little ones must go largely alone in climbing this hill. They have guides who tell them whither to go, and somewhat how, but the going is their own. No matter how wise and skilled the race becomes, each individual of the race begins at the bottom, and remains there or rises in proportion to his own efforts.

All this process is said to be one of getting ready for life. In very truth, it is life. The life of every man, as measured in consciousness and remembered in after years, is lived more before he is twenty than afterwards, and especially in the first decade of it.

Why this utter helplessness of the human off-spring at its birth? Why this long-continued weakness, this blank ignorance? Why this inevitable toil of each individual up the slippery and tortuous path from the cradle to manhood? The answer in general is, that this is the realm of hope for the race. This is the sphere in which humanity is made. It is the clay period for all fashioning. It is a field in which to plant and cultivate whatever men would have to come to maturity and permanence. "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron

heard in the house, while it was in building." The conditions of human childhood are fixed as they are in order that away from the eye of the world, and with adverse influences shut out, parents may fashion their children according to a preferred pattern, and make them ready for their places in that greatest of temples, the Church of Christ.

The prime object of the home is that it shall be a school of character; and of the Christian home, a school of Christian character. It is commonly agreed among the foremost educators of the day that the true end of education is not knowing, but being; not knowledge, but character. The child is placed in the home to be developed Godward. The task is a comparatively easy one when it is the main one. The fundamental lesson in all Christian life is the love of God. All things in the situation of the child in a well-ordered Christian home conspire to make this greatest of truths the easiest of all to learn. When Jesus began the typical prayer with those pregnant words, "Our Father," he practically

solved the problem of household religion. The terms bind the parent, who uses them and teaches them, to be as much like God as possible; and they likewise lead the children, who at first practically adore their parents, to an easy transition from an experience of the natural relations to a knowledge and sense of those which we call spiritual. The second great lesson of religion is, the love of man; and how easily and beautifully do the home relations measure themselves out into community relations, and at last to those of the world! From the love of God, as Creator, Protector, Giver of every good gift, comes love to God. And out of the love of man, that is the love of the parents revealed in a thousand ways, comes love to man, first in the family relations and afterwards in those of the community. On these two great commandments hang all the others, because the others have reference to duties which spring directly out of these two relations.

When we turn from these two most fundamental and comprehensive factors of religious char-

acter to those more particular personal qualities which by common consent must enter into it, we find that they flourish in childhood as in no other period. It is also notable that they then become rooted in habit as they cannot so well do at any other time of life, and thus gain a condition of thoroughness and permanence which it is otherwise impossible to obtain.

Among these qualities are faith or trust, obedience, reverence, love of righteous approval, penitence for misdeeds, forgiveness, unselfishness as shown in a quick recognition of the rights of others and in the absence of self-consideration, prayerfulness within proper and natural limits, and a general spirit of willingness to be led. The occurrence of cases to the contrary of this, which are very distinct and sometimes most distressing, does not stand against what we have here enumerated as the prevailing characteristics of the children in the home.

Faith, for example, or trust as it may be more properly called, is wholly natural to the child. It seems as inborn as sight or hearing, and it

grows normally and widens its sphere without shock if it be properly treated. It is safe to say that the child is incapable of unbelief or distrust until it has been taught the lesson of mistrust by some one of riper years. This lesson is often taught by those who have no purpose to do so, but who act from lack of thought, or lack of knowledge as to the outcome. One of the most common ways of destroying the faith of children is by what may be called the hobgoblin method of discipline. Who has not heard of the cow that hooks, the dog that bites, the bear that tears, the lion that eats up bad children, as a means of discipline in even unimportant matters, when the same ends could have been as easily attained by means more rational and in every way more wholesome? Faith is also destroyed by parents who promise and threaten without fulfilling their words. If, on the contrary, the trust of the child is allowed to grow naturally without these shocks which are never necessary, it will come to the point at which a discrimination has to be made between things that are false and those that

are true without any danger of being chilled, and a reasoning faith will follow easily the trust of infancy. It is really wonderful how faithful children are to the truth and how persistent in their trust when furnished, as they so often are, with the example of falsehood and deception by nurses and parents.

While obedience is a more complex state even than that of trust, it likewise is natural and easily developed to a point at which it becomes the safety and strength of the child. In order to be successfully developed it must be made continuous from the very beginning, and should be buttressed in as far as possible by an understanding of the reasons which underlie required courses of conduct. This discovery should, however, be left in a considerable measure to the child, for the reason, first, that the child's imperfect understanding must not be allowed to stand in the place of positive authority; and, second, because the child's development will be largely advanced by his own study of the reasons which underlie the laws of conduct given by the parents. The habit

of obedience will thus strengthen the disposition to obey in all literal ways until at even an early stage of life the child will act in obedience to what it conceives would be the parent's will in cases where it has not been, and for the present cannot be, expressed.

As it is with faith and obedience, so it is in varying degrees with all the other qualities and states mentioned in the above enumeration.

The child is placed in the home school under the conditions which we have mentioned for the purpose of being trained in character, of being brought to a state of independence fully prepared for a place in the broader spheres of social life. This being the case, there needs to be a careful surveillance of the subject of companionship in its two great fields of persons and books. The companionships of children and young people are so vitally related to their training, and to the outcome of the character which the home seeks to establish, that they stand in a place of importance which is next to extreme. Nothing more effectively reënforces the teachings of the home than

associations with those of the same cult. On the other hand, nothing more surely negatives these teachings than an influential adverse companionship. It not infrequently happens that years of training are largely destroyed by a single bad associate. The guardianship of the child at this point becomes a most sacred duty, though sometimes a most difficult one. The law announced by St. Paul, that evil communications corrupt good manners or morals, has not been abrogated and cannot be. It is laid in the nature of human society. If parents allow a current of evil, vitalized by youthful confidence, admiration, and a close personal touch, to run counter to the stream of influence which arises in the family, they need not be surprised at the damaging results which follow. There is no pestiduct between a world of badness and a home of purity equal to that furnished in a bad but intimate personal companionship. In extreme cases the pursuance of the proper course for preventing such associations, even in the most considerate way, may result in the breaking of the relation

between families; but the breaking of anything is better than the breaking of a human character.

The companionship of books is very much like that which is personal. One bad book sometimes spoils a good boy; one good book sometimes inspires and determines a great life. We are of an age which is a reading age to an extent never known before. The reading habit is well-nigh universal. Paper-making and book-making are great commercial movements, and they are commercially aggressive. It is of their business to find the readers. The children and young people of every household will read something. What shall it be? It is easy for most parents to furnish the limited quantity of reading matter needed in the earlier years. A proper care at that point will lead to the establishment of a correct taste. and do more than all things to set the habit in the right direction.

The development of these tendencies into established character can best be conducted only when due regard is had to the natural disposition of the child. A glance at these dispositions will be sufficient.

I. In the first place, children are imitative. Much of what they learn in various lines is acquired through the action of this inherent tendency. The learning of our complex English tongue is a formidable task for a grown person who, born in another tongue, essays to master ours even to a point of speaking it fairly well. But children by sheer imitation get it with comparative ease; and they imitate so well that if they have absolutely correct models in the home they attain thus their most accurate and inalienable knowledge of grammar. Children show almost as strong a tendency to imitate conduct or action as they do language. Their play is largely made up of a mimicry of manhood and womanhood. To-day they mimic without irreverence a prayer meeting or a missionary society; tomorrow a show passes through the community; and the next day the prayer meeting which was appointed fails to occur, but in place of it a show is held with improvised appointments and

with the true spirit of the showman. In the family circle this imitativeness is often seen in the smallest details, poses, gaits, and various mannerisms; and these movements often become in this way so habitual as to be ascribed to pure heredity. This disposition to imitate extends not only to physical performances, but to mental states and manifestations; and it does not cease to exist with the first stages of conscious self-direction, but abides, and with certain modifications, due to the growth of the faculties, becomes a considerable factor in determining the lives of young people when almost mature, sometimes when fully so. No one can fail to see, therefore, that this inborn quality or tendency furnishes the best of all conditions for the establishment of habit, and especially of habit which is to result from example.

No discerning parent can fail to be deeply impressed when he sees his own boy stretching his tiny legs in an effort to place his feet in his father's footprints. This act may be performed in fun or seriously, in a field of snow or in the sand

or dust of the street; but in any event it is the movement of a nascent manhood as it seeks to measure itself forward into full equality with the ideal or model which has gone before. So the mother, when she sees that not even a long dress made to order will be so acceptable to the little girl for "playing lady" in the nursery as is the cast-off skirt of the mother or grown-up sister, is in the midst of signals the warning of which should never be disregarded. These little ones, be it noted, are at last not so much engaged with the merely physical part of these performances as they are with ideals which are hovering just above, that is, with mental visions of the models which they are seeking to reproduce in their conduct

It is on this account that a well-ordered home in a refined community furnishes to the children a school of manners which is incomparable, one in which there is no need, or but little need, of any teaching aside from that which comes from example. The lessons are learned quietly and quickly under the impulse of imitation, and ripen

into character through habitual observance. I make no apology for this close association of manners and character in the rearing of children. There is a much closer and more vital relation between manners and morals than most parents allow. There are cases, it is true, where the one is fair and the other foul; but this is a species of genuine hypocrisy, and does not affect the rule. One of the most important functions of the home, therefore, is the inculcation of right views and habits in this regard. The habit of deference on the part of children, especially when it rests upon the example of parents, furnishes not only the conditions of pleasant and safe association in all social circles, but it gives a form within which the very spirit or quality of deference will grow on through a lifetime.

It has already been said that this imitation in children does not end with the age in which it is for a large part mere mimicry, but that with proper modifications in accord with age and subjects of thought it continues to maturity, or to the point of fixedness in the character type. It

needs also to be said that it is by no means confined to the minor affairs of young life, such as plays, attitudes, manners, etc., but that it obtains also in all the more serious concerns of life, and in nothing more than in the forms and habits of religious devotion. On this account it is comparatively easy for parents, by a simple and earnest performance of the duties of religion within the home, to establish in their children a habit of reverence for sacred things and of personal acts of devotion which will be found in after life to be one of the strongest safeguards against every form of nonreligious influence.

2. Children are *emulative*. This is much more than being imitative. They are naturally inclined toward an order of strife, which may be called the sense of competition. This quality is constantly revealed in their sports and in their work. It is at first a blind movement, the symptom of a latent power which in after life is to assert itself on every field of endeavor. This sense in children acts especially in the direction of things which their seniors regard as praise-

worthy. When this tendency is led in the direction of reverence, deference, and deeds of ennobling service within the household and community, the natural desire for competition is gratified and at the same time fixed upon a religious and broadening line. A child, with similar treatment, is no more disposed to be out of the fashion or behindhand in noble acts than in dressing, and will be as much disposed to choose a good rather than an inferior model and competitor in the one case as in the other. A proper appeal to this endowment, one that soundly develops but does not overwork the quality, is always a legitimate one. The utmost care must be taken, however, so to restrain and direct this disposition as to prevent an overgrowth of it on the part of the more successful, and the discouragement of the hindmost. The overshadowed member of the family deserves vastly more consideration and attention than he usually receives. He is generally liable to become the victim of an unrestrained emulation in the household.

3. Children are necessarily active. They feel

almost constantly the impulses of life and growth which are not known to grown people except through a faint memory. Children must, therefore, be at something. If something good be given them to do, they will do it with a genuine relish. This sense of endeavor is responsible, in partnership with incompetent trainers, for much that is called badness in children and youth. Perhaps the finest point in family discipline is involved in the direction of the children's activities. It requires some study, and sometimes real invention, but it repays for this trouble a hundred-fold. The usual substitute for this plan is what may be called the discipline of prohibition, or repression, a method which seeks the prevention of undesirable activities by forbidding them merely, instead of by rightly directing the irrepressible energies of childhood and youth. The right direction of these forces prevents idleness and discontent, and leads to the establishment of habits of order and diligence which are destined to go far in determining the success of the life. There is no situation so favorable to a normal religious development as one in which the whole life of the child and youth is taken up in the discharge of systematic and ennobling work. The home which fosters an idle and therefore aimless childhood is a seminary of false notions, and is destined to land those reared within it in a false if not a positively vicious life; while, on the other hand, there is no natural foundation for a great and effective religious character in after life equal to that which is laid in the habit of a diligent, systematic, and well-directed use of the faculties in the days of childhood and early youth.

4. Children are by nature generous. The heart of almost every child is sympathetic, and, because of this quality, gives ready response to that which is noble and helpful. As it is generous in its sympathies, it is always ready to respond promptly and freely to such situations as appeal to it. It is easy for children to be led to realize a larger pleasure in bestowing upon others than can be derived from the narrowing and painful habits of selfishness; and when once this enno-

bling joy has become an established order in the life of the child, it is not likely to be destroyed by the chilling atmospheres of after life. In this way only can men be reliably prepared for an unselfish and helpful participation in the various demands made by Christian society upon the services of its members. The selfish household cannot send forth the generous and public-spirited citizen.



X.

THE PLACE AND STATUS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.



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NEXT to the home, and closely allied with it in the chain of agencies for religious education, is the Sunday school.

It is not my purpose in this survey to undertake anything like an exhaustive treatment of Sunday-school work, and especially is it not my purpose to give any consideration to it in its merely technical aspects. This work has already been done by many skilled and painstaking writers. The object is rather to give an estimate of the Sunday school from the view point of modern educational thought, and to show its proper place in the scheme of religious education.

First of all, the modern Sunday school is a mammoth child of Divine Providence. The question as to who was the human founder of it

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has a relative but very inferior importance. It is perhaps enough to say that Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, was the founder of the first regular assemblies bearing this name, and having such continued existence as to be entitled to be called an institution. On the other hand, John Wesley, who quickly grasped the idea, and in harmony with his peculiar genius for godliness transformed the Sunday school into a purely religious institution embraced within the functions of the Church, was probably somewhat more the founder of the Sunday school as we know it than was Robert Raikes. The fairest presentation of this historical question is to make it, not one of, Raikes or Wesley, but of, Raikes and Wesley. Raikes is the true historic founder of the modern Sunday school, as a mere fact. Wesley's interpretation and use of it were as new and original as Raikes's movement. Raikes's work was a first step in a process of induction; Wesley's was a generalization of the largest import. Raikes was as Newton observing the fact that the apple falls; Wesley was as Newton noting a universal tendency, and opening up the whole field of inquiry as to the data and laws of gravitation.

Of the Sunday school as we have it neither Raikes nor Wesley nor any other man was the originator. Indeed, it would not be difficult to show that a number of men since that time have added single features which, for productiveness of large educational and religious effects, are greater now than the whole of the Sunday school was as it was known in the thought and practice of Raikes and Wesley. It may be as well to utter here as elsewhere a truth which to some readers will seem at first sight ungracious, and that is, that one of the chief drawbacks to that large efficiency of which the Sunday school of to-day is capable, is that many who are in places of authority and responsibility in the Church are. in their estimate of present-day work, still following an effete tradition—the tradition of the Sunday school as it was in the time of Raikes and Wesley. We are undergoing a regeneration at this point, but the birth is slow.

It is impossible rightly to understand the place

and work of the Sunday school in the scheme of religious education without at least a glance at two other spheres to which it is related. Much of the necessity for such an institution grows out of the failure of the home and of the day school to do a kind of religious work which lies clearly within their provinces.

It is a hard saying, but the facts compel its acceptance, that religious education in the sense of anything like systematic instruction in the Holy Scriptures has almost gone from the homes of Christendom. There are very many religious parents who think that in a well-ordered Sunday school all the work of religious education necessarv for the welfare of their children can be satisfactorily accomplished. There was never, perhaps, any error which had the semblance of truth in it that was as destructive. Nevertheless, it prevails to so great an extent that the work of religious instruction has been largely relegated from the home to the Sunday school. In the other sphere, that of the day school, a similar process has been going on until, in the United States religious education has been practically abandoned there. Especially is this true of that form of education which roots itself directly in the truths of the Bible, recognizing their divine imperative. We are worse off in this regard than most of the leading European nations. In France, for example, one day in each week is given as a holiday in which all pupils who desire it can be taught in the elements of religious truth. In England the Board schools, as their public schools are called, have incorporated in their course quite a good amount of religious instruction; while in Germany the religious courses are a considerable part of popular education. In our own country there is almost no religious instruction in the public schools, apart from the use of the Bible in the opening exercises.

Religious education, thus largely abandoned or relegated on the home side, and omitted from the schools on various pleas from the other, finds its almost solitary field within the Sunday school. This fact has brought the Sunday school in America into a prominence and an importance which are causing it to receive quite a large share of attention, not only from the side of the Churches within our domain, but from others who are studying our educational system.

Monsieur F. Buisson, president of the French Commission to examine into primary education in America, says: "The Sunday school is not an accessory agency in the normal economy of American education; it does not add a superfluity; it is an absolute necessity for the complete instruction of the child. Its aim is to fill by itself the complex mission which elsewhere is in large measure assigned to the family, the school, and the church. . . . All things unite to assign to this institution a grand part in the American life. Most diverse circumstances coöperate to give it an amplitude, a solidity, and a popularity which are quite unique. For denominational leaders, for those whom above all the interests of their Church preoccupy, the Sunday school is preëminently the instrument of propagandism."

Professor Emile de Laveleye, of Belgium, in his work on popular education says: "The Sunday school is one of the strongest foundations of the republican institutions in the United States."

The Sunday school, although a vast good, is not yet an unmitigated good. This is true chiefly from conditions which exist outside of the school itself, and for which, therefore, the institution is not primarily responsible. In so far, for example, as it is allowed to become a substitute for the home training of children, to take the place of the family school of religion, thus becoming the occasion for the neglect or abandonment of parental instruction and guardianship in religious matters, it works evil rather than good. Such an exchange is very much like the exchange of a birthright for a mess of pottage. That such an abuse is being made of the Sunday school by many is scarcely a debatable proposition; and the leading Sunday-school workers, those who intelligently recognize its true place and value, are the foremost to condemn and lament this misuse of it. They are the foremost also to grant that

the Sunday school will have accomplished one among a number of great ends when it shall have so illustrated the value of the religious work done in the tender years of child life as will cause a large part of this training to be resumed within the home. In other words, that a proper Sunday-school training will lead men back to the home as the place of supreme opportunity for the impartation of religious instruction and the establishment of religious habits.

When we come to consider the internal conditions of the Sunday school, we cannot but confess to the existence of serious defects which must be overcome in order that the institution may meet in anything like an adequate way the demands which the situation mentioned place upon it. In considering these defects it may be well to say, in advance, that while well-nigh universal they are not unexceptionally so. There are already some schools in existence which are models indeed; that is, they are without any serious defects, or such as mar the main purpose of their creation. Moreover, none of the defects

of which I shall speak are ineradicable. They do not inhere in the nature of the institution, and from one school after another they are being gradually eliminated. It is still true, however, that they exist in so large a majority of schools as to call for the most thoroughgoing work of correction on the part of those having control.

One of the chief defects of many Sunday schools is the lack of the right aim. Indeed, many of them seem to be without any definite aim at all. In either case the condition is really not so much due to the school itself as to the Church of which it is a projection and an expression. There are not a few parents who contribute their children to the numbers of the Sunday school who have no more definite estimate of it than that it is a good sort of police order by which children may be kept off the streets or out of other dangers and mischiefs for a part of the Sabbath, and that if the children learn nothing really good there they will at least learn nothing bad. Others deem it a harmless and refining recreation, while others holding the right view of its func-

tions are mostly distressed by a failure of it to accomplish those higher ends, and settle into an indifference born of discouragement. It is easy to see how utterly unwholesome such conditions are. The Sunday school, in truth, gets its right to exist from the Church of which it is a projection. When rightly projected, it is an expression of the Church's life at the growing point. Its aim ought, therefore, to be determined by the Church, and not left to the individual, or to the few. When rightly viewed, the Sunday school is a seminary of the Church, wherein the Church has its only opportunity of instructing its young life in the elements of religious knowledge and of training it in the habits of service. Whatever the Church may desire and expect of its members in their adult life ought to be inculcated in the Sunday-school life of the children and youth. It is not going too far to say that much of the lack of definite and correct aim on the part of the Sunday school is due to a state of indifference on the part of the Church. Indeed, it is not uncommon for church officials, who have accepted a place of responsibility for the welfare of the local church, to place upon one man, the superintendent, a supreme responsibility and then withdraw from him, never even so much as afterwards entering the Sunday school to see how the most important work under their administration progresses. If, instead of this untoward state of things, there were back of every superintendent and his school an official board that would lend the full force of its personal and official aid in the religious education of the children committed to its charge, all Christendom would thrill with a life and power of spiritual conquest which it has never known. The need of the hour is an aroused Church, one which shall place a proper value upon the child, and upon the fateful significance of those fleeting years in which, if at all, children must be prepared for taking their rightful places in the kingdom of God.

Perhaps the chief defect or deficiency of the Sunday school is the lack of properly prepared teachers. It is easy to see that such a defect is very far-reaching, but just how far-reaching it is difficult to estimate. In schools of every form the teacher is, after all is said, the main thing. Whether a Sunday school, therefore, shall accomplish the desired ends depends on the view the teachers take of their work, and upon their equipment for doing it in the right way.

One of the most astonishing things in connection with the modern Sunday-school movement is the absence for so long a time of any provision on the part of the Church for the preparation of its members for this greatest of its tasks. There have been from the start some good Sundayschool teachers, and there are now a few thousand who are not to be excelled in their equipment or method by the highest type of teachers to be found in the best graded schools, colleges, and universities of our day. But the number now engaged in Sunday-school teaching reaches a total of not less than two millions, and of these the great majority are wholly without that limited but special equipment necessary to even a moderate success. Many, indeed, are lacking in

that general acquaintance with the truth to be dealt with which is an absolute requisite on the part of the lowest grade of secular teachers. It is not difficult to see that this state of general unpreparedness on the part of any considerable element of the Church membership has led, and must ever lead, to a choice of teachers more from the accidents of necessity than from the fitness of those chosen for the doing of this work.

The responsibility for this state of things has rested and still rests with the Churches, and a failure to meet it has not been due so much to an inability to do so as to that state of indifference to which I have already alluded.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was the first of the Churches to make definite and somewhat adequate provision for meeting the demand for trained Sunday-school teachers. In 1901 the Sunday School Board of this Church prepared a course of study, and a plan for operating it. A man of the highest qualification for teacher training was placed in charge of the department as Superintendent of Training Work.

After proper trial of the plan had been made, the General Conference of 1902 adopted it, and the Teachers' Study Circle was incorporated into the polity of the Church, and thus became one of its permanent institutions. The course of study is not an extensive one, but is especially adapted to the needs of the majority of the teachers. The same course has also been introduced into the schools themselves as an advanced course there, so that an ample number may before they leave the school to this extent be qualified for the work of teaching. On the completion of this course a diploma is given to all who pass the required standard. Since the organization of this movement some other denominations have taken steps in the same direction, while several theological schools and theological departments have established courses for the better preparation of pastors for dealing with the Sunday-school work. The light at last begins to break, and it is to be hoped that before very long the reproach and detriment of unqualified religious teachers shall have passed away, and that the pathetic story of

the individual teacher, struggling alone without the direction or sympathy of his Church, shall come to an end.

One of the chief incidental drawbacks to which the Sunday school of the past has been subjected has been that of church architecture. The old style church, many specimens of which still survive, was suffused with an atmosphere of inhospitality toward children. Its construction and furnishing were a silent prohibition of childish presences except under penalties which affected more than one of the realms of feeling. Every such house said plainly that it was not made for children; that it was the place of grown people only. The doctrine thus preached through wood and stone has had a far-reaching influence, not only upon children, but upon grown people who, instead of rising in the tenderness and majesty of parenthood and abolishing such symbols of harshness, have tamely submitted from generation to generation. It must now ever remain to our discredit that it was nearly two thousand years after Jesus folded the little ones in his arms before his Church made a comfortable bench for them to sit upon, or built houses of worship with the slightest reference to those of whom he said, "Suffer the little ones to come unto me." The majority of the church houses are still of this type, but they are rapidly passing away by the addition of convenient and comfortable quarters for the children, or, what is much better, are being substituted by new churches which are built with large, if not primary, reference to the comfort and instruction of children and young people. A new era has really come, for every child reared in these better houses of instruction and worship will become an apostle of the new and better order.

But despite all the defects and deficiencies of the Sunday school, and the hindrances which have beset it, it has grown enormously, not only in externals, such as numbers and equipments, but in the extent and quality of the work done within it. In a century and a quarter it has grown from a handful of ragged and besotted children under four paid teachers into a multitude of more than twenty-five millions of the flower of the race, including more than two millions of consecrated teachers, who are not only giving their services without money and without other reward, but are themselves among the chief financial supporters of the institution.

Probably no one who has rightly measured the magnitude of the Sunday-school movement will dissent from the opinion that it is to-day the largest factor in the religious forces of the world.



XI.

SOME ESSENTIALS OF SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK.



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There are certain conditions which are absolutely essential to a Sunday school, if it is to fulfill the mission which, as we have seen, is providentially assigned to it in the modern scheme of religious education. I shall discuss these briefly in what I consider to be the order of their importance.

I. The first of these conditions is the Sunday-school pastor. I make no apology for placing this agency clearly above every other. It is a truly awful thing for any man to be made an overseer of the flock of Christ. Such a one becomes thereby the one man who is in a good sense wholly responsible for the spiritual welfare of the entire flock. In the case of the pastor who is right-minded and rightly equipped for his sacred office, there is a recognized authority and a

power of direction which correspond with his responsibility. Probably no man is more plenipotent in his rightful sphere than is the minister of the gospel. It follows hence that he may procure through the laymen the doing of such work as he is unable to do from limitations of time and strength, and sometimes of natural abilities. Nothing works so favorably in securing all the ends to be attained in and by a congregation as a deep sense on the part of the pastor that he is solely responsible for those results. It does not mean, of course, that he is personally to undertake their achievement, but that he is to act the part of a wise and enthusiastic leader in all that needs to be done.

What is the most important department of the Church for the accomplishment of the spiritual ends which the pastor is set to advance? If this question were submitted to all the pastors of the nation, probably nine-tenths of them would vote the Sunday school to be this field. And yet there is reason to believe that there are not one-tenth of them who are acting as they vote. A truth is

sometimes rolled about among the multitudes, and even among the classes to which it especially pertains, till it becomes indurated, so incrusted, indeed, as to be unable to germinate. Thus it seems to be in a large measure with this most important of the economic truths in the conduct of the modern Church. Many there are who in theory place the Sunday school foremost among the agencies of spiritual development; few there are who are making a corresponding use of it.

In the first place, the pastor who does not rightly value the child cannot rightly value the man. And nothing is more fatal to the real work which justifies a preacher's place in the world than a false estimate of the humanity which he seeks to save. A low estimate of men is an invincible disqualification in a preacher of the gospel for which no affluence of gifts and attainments can atone. To correctly value the child is to be a lover of children. The pastor who does not love children needs to be converted, that is, he needs to turn round and become a child again: it is no task for children to love one another.

And it goes without the saying that where there is a genuine love it will work out its own proper forms of expression. This expression may be, and oftentimes is, an awkward one in the lover, the husband, the parent, the friend, the pastor; but wherever love is truly unfeigned, there is grace enough in the sentiment to make all needful amends for the manner of its revelation. It is better, of course, that it should have a refined, tactful, tasteful exhibit, but the one indispensable thing is the sentiment itself.

Moreover, the pastor should never be ignorant of the fact that there is no highway of entrance into the hearts of parents like that which lies through the interests and hearts of their children. There is scarcely any exception to this rule, because by the very scheme of nature a man must have become strangely abnormal who is not subject to such an influence. Not only so, but love inspires love, and any community, even though it be but little inclined to spiritual things, knows that to have a man in public relations with it who is clean, high, enlightened, sympathetic, and

strong, toward whom the hearts of the children turn as by the power of a lodestone, is a circumstance of great value. Men feel this to be true oftentimes when they do not articulate it even to themselves.

But in order to love the children a pastor must first know them. One of the profoundest hints in our Saviour's characterization of himself as the Good Shepherd is contained in the statement that "the Shepherd calleth his own sheep by name." The name itself is a matter of no small importance to him who has it. But the deeper meaning of this passage is that the Shepherd knows his sheep intimately and feels a deep personal interest in them. The pastor who knows the children of his charge only in the Sunday school will not know them very well there. He needs to know them in the household. and not their names only, but their qualities. This is not as difficult a matter as it would seem, provided it be gone about in the right way. Parents are always willing to talk of their children, even to the point of revealing their worse or

weaker qualities, and especially to one who has a genuine interest in them, and who is willing to help in their right development.

But whatever may be the pastor's relations to the children of his charge within their homes. his chief opportunity in two most vital directions lies within the Sunday school itself. I refer to the evangelical and educational functions of the school and the pastor's relation to both. It is not going too far to say that this most fruitful source of evangelism is the most neglected by pastors. This neglect is too general to be wholly a matter of accident or oversight. If the pastors who are guilty of it would have the candor to inquire fully into the cause of it, they would probably find it in a lurking, hard-shell infidelity as to the fitness of children for membership in the kingdom of God. When at the core of the situation there is a deadly unbelief like this, it is no wonder that the Sunday school fails to accomplish its chief aim. He who has even a lingering doubt as to whether or not the devil has any vested rights in the childhood of the race

because of Adam's fall, who does not recognize Christ's distinctly asserted claim in them, is under a fatal disqualification for dealing with the religious interests of children. But if the pastor sincerely believes the doctrine that Christ has a kingdom already within the cradle, and recognizes that the chief work of parents, teachers, and pastors is to keep them in the kingdom and develop them there, the Sunday school furnishes the best of all opportunities for that kind of evangelism which is adapted to the securing of their salvation. There are to-day millions of children in the homes of Christendom, and standing near the altars of the Church, who would gladly enter if they could. Their attitude is one which continually says to their seniors and guides, What lack we yet? And what answer can these guides give that would be accepted in heaven, or on earth? This answer, whatever it may be, certainly cannot be that the children lack faith. The purest faith in the world is in the child heart. An unbelieving child is a monstrosity, and one almost never met with in the world.

And the very finest of their faith is that which they have in God and in the realities of the spiritual world. Indeed, these same guides, when they come to tell a grown person how to enter the kingdom, tell him that he must have faith, a faith that trusts like that of a little child. This answer certainly cannot deny that children have humility and a consequent willingness to be led. Here again they make this same neglected child the model for the grown-up man. But what about repentance? Surely no other age is equal to childhood in genuine sorrow for a known transgression, and none so quick to reform or abstain. It is true that it is very difficult for children to repent of a sin which they know they have not committed, as some seek to have them But within the range demanded of adult seekers after God the penitence of children is the purest known. If it be said that children who give themselves to Christ at so tender an age cannot when grown remember the experiences of that hour, cannot remember that they were born again, we answer, Neither can they remember

when they were born the first time; the only evidence of their having been born at all is the life that is in them. So it is with the Christian; the less he depends upon the memories of a certain hour as the proof of being alive in Christ, and the more he finds these evidences in the life he now has, the better it is.

To the pastor who sincerely believes in childhood religion, the Sunday school offers every possible opportunity for advancing it. The pastor has fifty-two occasions in each year, any or all of which he may use in harmony with his best judgment. If he be wise, he will have a definite plan of movement running throughout the year and embracing both instruction and proper persuasion. He will also occasionally instruct the pupils in classes, apart from the Sunday-school session, according to age and need, and thus prepare them first for intelligent Church membership, and afterwards for growth in all the elements of religious character. All the work of the school ought, indeed, to lead up to the work of the pastor for evangelical ends. The very object

of its existence is the complete salvation of the pupils.

But there is another function belonging to the pastor which everywhere requires fuller recognition. I refer to his directorship of the educational work of the school. In the present order of Sunday-school provision this agency on his part is indispensable. The pastor must be the teacher of his teachers. By common consent the supreme need of the Sunday school is teachers who can really teach. Most churches have thus far made no provision for their equipment, or next to none, and especially while this state of things continues must the pastor take upon himself and his local assistants the labor of securing at least a fair preparation of teachers for their work. A clear understanding on the part of the pastor himself of the sacredness and far-reaching importance of the teacher's work will go very far toward enabling him to inspire his teachers with the right view of their work, which when they once have they will be eager to follow his lead. The holding of the ordinary teachers' meeting

for the preparation of the weekly lesson is not enough, although even this would be an immense gain in most schools. The real need is for the study of a teachers' course. It need not be large, but it ought to be vital; that is, it ought to deal with the art of presenting the truth as well as with a well-arranged knowledge of the book to be taught. There are numerous small books, two or three of which properly mastered would transform the teaching work of most of the schools. If the Church to which the school belongs has prepared such a course, the way of the pastor is made easy. He is reënforced by the judgment of his Church as to the scope and actual subjectmatter which are deemed a reasonable preparation of the teachers. If no such work has been prescribed by the Church, then it devolves wholly upon the pastor, and his task consists first of determining what books are best suited to the needs of his own group of teachers. Any pastor who lacks knowledge for the selection of such a course can easily obtain the help he needs from the head of the Sunday-school department of any of the

Protestant Churches. The pastor who is not willing to do this much to help the teachers, who are without reward teaching the children and young people of his congregation in the word of eternal life, presents the appearance of one who If he should decline to do this work on the ground that he is too busy with more important work, he will cause thoughtful men to wonder what on earth he can be doing. This is a popular plea for this very neglect, but on close scrutiny it will be found to be only as reasonable as it would be for the farmer to answer the cries of his children for bread with the apology that at planting time he was too busy with other things about the farm to sow the wheat or plant the corn. Of course, if the pastor can get some other well-qualified person to do this work it will relieve him of the actual labor, and may work just as well in results.

2. Next to the preacher in the scale of responsibility stands the superintendent, a new creation in the economy of the modern Church, and one of very great value and importance. It is prob-

able that in most sections the Church has not thus far realized of how great value this new order of worker is, and how truly indispensable to the right growth of the Church under its modern order. Any community which has in it an intelligent, diligent, exemplary, and competent man who is willing to take in hand and guide through the years the children and youth of the community, in a well-planned effort to teach them in the divine oracles and train them in the habits of religious life, and as workers in the Church, possesses in such person an element of inestimable value. When we regard the fact that the office involves large labor and delicate responsibilities, and is vet without remuneration, and is often executed in the face of many unnecessary limitations and even antagonisms, the readiness of so large a number of laymen to do this work is one of the most striking indications of the strength and efficiency of the laity of the Church of Christ. The least that any community can do fairly in response to the efforts of such a man is to remove as far as possible all obstacles and furnish

all necessary means, both personal and material, for the achievement of the ends for which the superintendent labors. The office of Sunday-school superintendent, while not expressly provided for in the gifts of the apostolic Church, has so clearly proved itself to be a providential development out of the life of Christianity that it will probably abide as long as the office of pastor abides, and should have all proper honor placed upon it by the Church.

The first qualification of the superintendent is that he shall be a spiritually-minded man who accepts and holds his place for the one purpose of helping souls. He needs also, if possible, to have the power of clear and direct speech (but not too much speech). He needs also to have some powers of organization, inasmuch as every well-ordered school requires a considerable amount of this kind of work. The superintendent is, in several important respects, the pastor's chief helper. He is the second element in a process which reaches from the pastor of the church to the children in the school. His function is,

therefore, largely pastoral. Indeed, the best of all assistant pastors is a first-class superintendent. The pastor and superintendent acting together should determine the policy of the school, select the teachers, organize classes, and supervise the whole of the teaching work. The superintendent's work is by no means confined to the school room, but under right conditions it soon becomes on the outside commensurate with the pastoral charge, sometimes going even beyond it.

3. If the Sunday school is to accomplish the work which by common consent has been assigned to it in the thought and organization of the modern Church, it must be made truly educational in its aims and methods. There is nothing which men more need to hold with a deep rational certitude than the faith upon which the moral inspiration of their lives and their final destinies depend. For the Church to undertake to teach its children and youth in the oracles of God, and then to do this in a bungling and inadequate way, especially in a way which violates or disregards the fundamental principles of all true

education, is an order which has in it a savor of death unto death. If the children and youth of the nation who are five days in the week under teachers in the secular schools who are well acquainted with the whole round of data to be handled, and well versed in the fundamental laws of teaching, so as to inspire and lead the pupil into a realization and use of his own powers of acquisition and discovery, are turned over on the Sabbath to be taught by teachers who plainly lack a knowledge of the matter to be taught and who proceed in violation of every known law of teaching, as is often the case, what effect is this contrast likely to have on the mind and character of the thoughtful student? Is it not likely at the very least to cause him to hold both the book upon which his religious faith rests and the day on which it is taught with a sort of apologetic tennre?

It is not according to the scope of my purpose to enter into details on this question, but a few general suggestions may be of some service. All the main issues are involved in two points. The

first is the plan of the school, and the second is the teacher. It seems the merest commonplace to say that the plan of the school shall be a carefully graded one. There is some prejudice against this order based on a misapprehension of its meaning. The grading of a Bible school after the exact meaning of grading a grammar school, the latter having thirty or more hours a week, and the former less than one, and that with a vaster amount of material to be handled, is not possible. But this is not the meaning of the proposal. Every good school of any kind must be graded. Proper grading is merely the adaptation of the truth to be taught, and the method of teaching it, to the age and other conditions of qualification on the part of the pupil for receiving it.

Under the present order most of the grading to be done is in the proper classification of the pupils, and the remainder must be left very largely to the teacher. When I say under the present order, I mean under the system of lessons provided by the International Uniform Lesson Plan. When this plan of one lesson for all grades was adopted, it was doubtless the best thing that could be done for various reasons which need not here be stated. But from the educational standpoint it was never the ideal plan, and with the growth of educational thought is becoming constantly further from meeting the demands as they ought to be met. A uniform lesson in the sense of the same lesson for every school is so good and reasonable a plan, and has in it so many incidental advantages, that it will probably abide and grow stronger for an indefinite period of time. But the doctrine of one lesson for all ages of life and stages of development seems to be unnatural, unpedagogical, and is even now unstable in its hold upon the sympathies of educators. Its availability for the best results depends so much upon the gifts and the work of the individual teacher that in the present state of unpreparedness on the part of teachers the results desired are not being obtained as they might be under a different order. A proper adjustment lies easily within the domain of the International Convention, and steps have already been taken by it which look in the

direction of the improvement of plans at this point.

There are but few subjects which have received larger or more intelligent attention within the last decade than has that of what constitutes the true aim of religious education and how to attain it. This study has embraced a large realm, including the subject-matter, the order of its presentation, the grading of teachers and pupils, the methods of instruction, and the end to be reached.

Among the numerous writers who have brought large scholarship and experience to bear in the solution of these essential problems of religious education are Professors Haslett,¹ Du Bois,² Pease,³ Burton and Matthews,⁴ and Coe.⁵ These writers have approached the subject, each from his own standpoint, but together they have furnished a volume of information and suggestion which cannot but deeply affect the future work of the Bible school, both in the home and the Church.

^{1&}quot;The Pedagogical Bible School." 2"The Natural Way." 3"An outline of a Bible School Curriculum." 4"Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School." 5" Education in Religion and Morals."



XII.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AS A FIELD OF TRAINING.



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Religious education bears a more marked resemblance to industrial education than it does to any other form. There is in both such a relation between knowing and doing as renders the one imperfect without the other. As, for example, no amount of mere instruction can without practice prepare a builder for executing the plans of an architect, so no amount of knowledge about goodness can make a man a Chris-There must in both cases be such practice as will make the knowledge to become vital in ac-Knowledge thus used will lead to skill, and skill will in turn bring a fullness of knowledge. When Jesus said that if any man would do the will of his Father he should know of the doctrine, he by implication closed the way to that sacred knowledge to all those who should seek it for any

less end than to put it into practice in experience and conduct. Hence it is that not a few scholars run mad after mere knowledge are unsafe guides as to the deeper meaning of the Holy Scriptures. They sometimes know less about this than do the common people who have gone no further than plainly to read and then devoutly practice the truth, and have thus discerned the mind of the Spirit. It is in view of this principle that one of the most important functions of the Sunday school is a work of training. There are four distinct yet closely related spheres in which this work should be carried on.

I. The first of these is training in knowledge. There is a vast difference between understanding a thing and knowing it. Especially with children, it is not enough that they get a clear view of a truth. It is necessary that they be properly drilled. The methods of the old drill-master need to be restored in a good measure to the Sunday schools. In suggesting this I do not mean that the order prescribed by a sound pedagogy should be violated. But rather that when

the truth adapted to any given state of development and attainment is reached, there ought to be such drilling in that truth as to make it a definite and inalienable possession of the pupil's mind. The wonderful stories which we sometimes see of the ignorance of the Bible on the part of the young people of our day are only too true, but that condition is not due so much to the fact that they have not been taught in the sacred Scriptures as to the inadequate way in which they have been taught. If the children and young people were required to do more memory work, and also more original or personal work, they would retain what they learn, and thus the knowledge obtained in the usual Sunday-school course would be valuable as an attainment. An excellent exercise in drilling is to hold frequent, short reviews, to cultivate in the pupil the habit not only of retaining his knowledge but of having it at ready command. The quarterly review for the school is well enough, but the teacher who does not introduce much of review work along with the weekly recitation misses one of the best op-

portunities for confirming the pupil's knowledge. Still another help of great value is to have one or two pupils write a short essay on a previous lesson for the purpose of expressing in it the knowledge acquired in the class, with the understanding that all the other pupils are to criticise, giving their approval or dissent. There are many other forms of drill such as drawings, constructions, recitations, etc., which teachers are using for making the knowledge of the pupils both accurate and permanent. It will be found, of course, that one form of expression will be without interest to certain pupils while another form will be of absorbing interest. It belongs to the teacher to observe these peculiarities of taste and to give them proper direction.

2. The second sphere of training is that of religious experience. To the religious emotionalist this may seem a cold and unworthy view, but even a brief survey of the subject will make my meaning clear. We do not hesitate to allow that the development of the sentiments and even emotions in other directions than the religious is

in keeping with a sound psychology. Especially is this true of what we commonly call moods which are more or less permanent states of feeling. The influence of the will in all such matters is so far-reaching that it is difficult to determine its real extent. That the will determines in favor of that which is seen to be the best, and leads to it as a permanent state of the affectional nature, does not vitiate the genuineness of the product as seen in states of sentiment and character. Our religious experiences are much more a matter of training than we are accustomed to believe. It is more on this account than any other that such experiences vary so widely in different ages, communities, and denominations. The attitude of the mind has much to do in determining their character, their intensity, and their duration or permanence. It is here very much as it is in the social life of men. In one family we are chilled by the absence of any satisfactory signs of affection, and of those peculiar enjoyments which cannot exist without it. In another, the atmosphere of the household is redolent of

this beautiful spirit, and all the manners and conversation of the family are further means of its expression. The difference is very largely a matter of training rather than of native qualities. The same thing is true in the larger social relations of the community. When we come into the realm of religious life, we find no exception to this rule. The giving of thanks at the table furnishes to children the proper forms for the expression of gratitude, leads to thought upon the source of our blessings, and thus develops the sentiment of thankfulness. Especially is this true if it be done in terms that are clear, hearty, and fresh, so as not to become a meaningless commonplace. Likewise in family devotions the attitude and terms of reverence lead to the development of a reverent and worshipful spirit which easily grows into a permanent sentiment.

But the child must sooner or later pass out of these home relations into the more public relations of the Church and the religious community, where the religious sentiments are to be still further molded, and in a sense enlarged. Two questions of great practical import arise at this point. One is as to the proper age for a formal attachment of the child to the Church, and the other as to the best way in general for bringing this about. As to the first question, I would suggest that the age of twelve has been found to be a most suitable time. In the Jewish Church of a former day the age was about fourteen. This does not mean that there are not many cases in which this important step may be taken at a considerably earlier stage. It is only intended to suggest what will be found to work satisfactorily as a general rule. As to the best way of effecting this induction into the larger sphere, I would say that nothing better has been tried than what is called Decision Day.

In a small publication¹ on this subject about three years ago I took occasion to express regret that so important and valuable an occasion had been set forth under so unfortunate a name. It is, indeed, a misnomer; for if the occasion were

^{1&}quot;Decision Day," by Atkins and Hamill.

truly a Decision Day it would be liable to a number of objections which have been urged against it on that ground. It would be much more in line with the real meaning of the occasion to call it Announcement Day, or Commitment Day, for this is in truth what it is when rightly conducted.

In order that the day may accomplish the best results, there are several conditions which need to be present. (1) The day itself should be made a rightly solemn and impressive occasion. Enough time should be taken from the school session to allow the service to be full and orderly. The service should consist of the reading of those Scriptures having special reference to children and their relations to God; and of songs especially chosen beforehand, and of prayer, and an instructive and persuasive talk. In other words, it should be made a truly instructive and evangelistic service. (2) The occasion should include the whole school, embracing even the primary department. It ought to be a special occasion for the coming together of the members of the Home Department with the regular school.

The invitation to this Commitment should not be limited to the age mentioned or to the class especially prepared by previous training, but should the rather be of the broadest scope. One of the most interesting occasions of this kind ever witnessed by the writer was one on which fifty-six persons were taken into the Church from the Sunday school, and the company embraced persons all the way from bright girls of seven up to a gray-haired man of more than threescore. (3) The pastor, the teachers, and the parents should do a large amount of preliminary work. When the list of eligible members of the school has been made out by the teachers' meeting, or, if there be no teachers' meeting, by the pastor and superintendent, each teacher should be furnished with the names of those in his or her class so that special attention may be given them and special prayer be made for and with them. parents should also be informed as to the nature of the work proposed, and their coöperation asked. It is well then for the pastor, as is now the custom with not a few, to have all these children in a class to be especially instructed in the nature and claims of personal religion, until they have been led, if possible, into a satisfactory religious experience. By all means, those who do not reach this state before Commitment Day ought to be continuously guided afterwards until they do so. Herein truly is the best opportunity for effective pastoral evangelism ever afforded in the history of the Church.

It is easy to see that from a Commitment Day thus conducted two excellent results will be reached, apart from those which accrue directly to those making the committal. (1) It will prevent the occasion from becoming an incitement to mere spurts of enthusiasm, unsustained by instruction and a fixed purpose. (2) It will cause the children who are under the age mentioned to look forward to it as a time at which they may also give similar expression to their religious impulses, and will thus influence the use of the religious teaching given them and also their conduct in the home and school relations.

As to the children who in this way publicly

commit themselves to a life of religious service, it puts them into line for a course of instruction by the pastor, teachers, and parents which more than anything else will make them realize what is the supreme aim in all our Sunday-school work. This will lead to a more intelligent and effective use of their opportunities, and will in every way tend directly to the development of a religious experience.

The exercises of Commitment Day should lead immediately to Church membership. There are some who question the wisdom of taking children into full membership at an early age. The grounds of objection do not seem to me to be sound in any particular. All the reasons for Church membership are eminently present in the case of children of the ages and conditions of which I have been speaking. The intelligent, voluntary assumption of the vows of conduct and service, the coming thereby into conscious and active relations with the broader religious community, the use of the holy sacrament, the regular performance of the simple acts of private

devotion, the fixing of social relations largely within a circle of people like-minded, a proper study of the polity and purpose of the Church, etc., are conditions which foster as nothing else can the growth of spiritual life. They are all truly educational in the double sense of preventing the growth of untoward conditions and relations, and in directly developing those characteristics and habits of life which the Church seeks to promote.

There are not a few who fear that this order tends to the induction into the Church and the retention there of large numbers of unconverted people. This view seems to be made up without proper regard for the facts and influences which are necessarily involved. First of all, the chief part which human agency plays in matters of religious experience is in the production of the right attitude on the part of the individual as the receiver of the divine communications. The human heart in its relations to the divine grace is very much as a temple which stands bathed in the sunlight. So long as the temple doors and win-

dows are closed, there is of course darkness; but whenever they are opened, and in proportion as they are opened, the light enters and floods the spaces. Likewise when men at any age open the heart Godward there is no arbitrary delay. It is then that the supernatural forces of the religion of Christ enter and accomplish the work to which they are destined in the divine scheme of recovery and salvation. If it be assumed that there are some who enter the Church and remain in it for a shorter or longer period without any experiential knowledge of their acceptance with God, such seem still to be in the best situation for being finally led into the light. Surely if the Church is, as we believe, the chief instrumentality through which God elects to communicate saving grace to men; if its members constitute the only aristocracy of virtue known in the world, that is, are a community in which the dominant condition of association is the possession of Christian character; if there alone are to be found the best instruction in religious truth and the highest incitement to a pure and sur-

rendered life, it cannot but be the best place for any who is a sincere seeker of salvation. To assume that to continue on the outside, in the atmosphere of the world, and in associations which to say the least do not tend to religion, could constitute a more wholesome and favoring situation for one who truly desires to lead a religious and dutiful life than is afforded by the Church, seems violent if not irrational. The one object of the existence of the Church is the saving of men in all the varied senses of that term. on this account the chosen sphere of the Holy Spirit for using the word of God and all other agencies assembled there, for producing first penitence and faith, and afterwards all the fruits of a complete religious character.

3. There must be training in giving. Genuine benevolence usually takes two active forms, giving and service. The latter of these will be considered in the next section. The New Testament doctrine concerning all forms of possession is that of stewardship. Children may be taught this doctrine easily if it be gone about in a natural

way. The opportunity for this kind of teaching is ever present to the parent or teacher who has even ordinary impressibility by the situations of common life. Indeed, one must be unusually dull not to discover a wealth of opportunity for the inculcation of this lesson. It must never be forgotten in this connection that we are teaching Christianity or nothing. The fundamental fact in Christianity is that Christ, the Founder, gave himself for men. Next to this stands the doctrine that men must give themselves for others; and the third step consists of cases of need, to be helped under the guidance of a broad intelligence. Fortunately, in the practical aspects of the Christian school of benevolence, the great benevolence called the cause of Missions comes first. I say fortunately, for the reason that that cause is generic; that is, as a principle and as an operation it embraces all the common forms of Christian helpfulness. Young people, and even children, can be easily led to see that this is the case. This implies, of course, that they should be rightly instructed as to the nature and ends of all missionary work. Indeed, proper instruction must underlie all this work in order that it may have its true effect as an educational process.

Mere giving, even if it be systematic, loses much of its value in developing character unless there is a corresponding growth in intelligence as to the obligations and end of such work. This brings into view what may be pronounced the chief defect in the missionary work among most of the young people of our time, namely, the lack of full and orderly instruction. There is perhaps no point at which the Church needs to look more closely into the foundations which it is laying for the future expansion of the kingdom of Christ. The situation would be greatly helped if the International Lesson Committee would provide for at least two great missionary lessons each year. There would then be a careful study of the whole Bible with a view to the selection of the best twelve passages in it for the teaching of al! the scriptural phases of this great doctrine within the six years' course. These passages, being really missionary texts instead of mere incidents

or allusions to be used as pretexts for missionary teaching, would furnish within the regular Sunday-school course cardinal truths about which the Churches could assemble in an orderly way, and in vital relations, a large amount of other missionary matter which needs to be taught. Certain Sunday schools and Missionary Boards have already taken steps to procure such an order if it be deemed advisable by the Committee. Meanwhile the separate denominations can do-some of them are doing-quite a considerable amount of effective work on this line. This may be done (1) by the introduction into the general Sundayschool literature as much as practicable of wellchosen missionary reading; (2) by the circulation within the schools of similar matter prepared and furnished through Missionary Boards; (3) by short, vital missionary drills before the entire school; (4) by the frequent rendering of missionary programmes filled with elements at once instructive and inspirational.

The process of giving is also an important item. Giving, in order to be truly educational,

and also to produce good results in mere money, ought to be systematic. This is necessary to the end that it may become a habit and thus vitally affect the character. This systematizing of the school's work may be advanced by adopting something like the following order: (1) Let each school resolve itself into a missionary society or body, the officers of the school being also the officers of the society. This obviates a separate organization, and brings it about that every one who enters the school thereby enters a missionary society. The Church needs to be educated out of the habit of seeking to advance this great interest through numerous special societies instead of doing the work as a whole—as a Church. (2), Each school should take an intelligent survey of its numbers and abilities, and in view of these voluntarily assume a minimum amount to be raised for the year. (3) Each class should then assume such part of the whole as it may deem itself able to give. This readily brings the work down to the individual member of the class, and brings forcibly to the attention of each his per-

sonal obligation to do such part of the class's work as he may be able. (4) Certain days should be set apart for missionary giving. The best plan has been found to be the setting apart of one Sunday in each month, any but the fifth. (5) The pupils should be encouraged to produce by their own efforts a part at least of the money they give. There is some self-expression in a boy's remembering the time of the collection, going to his parents and asking for the money, taking it to the school and placing it in the collection basket. But this is not enough. The best educational results can be obtained only when the pupil derives the means of giving through his own activities. It is at last not our money that God wants, but ourselves; and our money is acceptable as an act of worship only as it is in some good sense an expression of our love for God and for men.

But there are other causes of a benevolent nature that the Church seeks to advance by the gift of money. All these the Sunday school should be trained to take part in. It will be well in doing this to follow the general plan suggested above. These pupils are within a few years to be the grown people who will have upon them the responsibilities which now belong to their fathers and mothers, and their training now will determine of what sort they shall be, and how all the interests of the Church shall prosper in their hands.

It is well for the Sunday school to take a part in defraying its own expenses for literature, equipment, etc. One or two Sabbaths in the year might be set apart for this purpose chiefly for its educational effect. The support of the school ought to be almost wholly a care of the Church, and not of the school. While the moral effect of helping somewhat will be good for the school, the moral effect produced in the Church by its recognition and discharge of this duty will be found of very great value.

4. The fourth sphere of training is that of service. While the opportunities for personal service are not so numerous as those for other forms of worship, they are much more numerous

than many superintendents allow. There are many ministries in the conduct of the school itself in which the pupils may be of service, and especially in connection with special occasions or undertakings. Then there are errands of courtesy, business, and mercy upon which they may go during the week. They can be the bearers of help to the needy, flowers to the sick, communications of condolence to the bereaved. In one community where the writer resided there was a blind boy whose only means of self-support was the manufacture within his own room of a certain useful article. He found that as he had to work with his hands alone the output was insufficient. With a little machinery, worth seventy-five to a hundred dollars, he would be easily self-sustaining. The young people of the Sunday school found out his needs, devised their own method of making the money, and within a short time brightened the life of the boy by the gift of money enough for his full equipment. This empowering of the boy for self-support was immensely better than many times that amount doled out for his maintenance. Another case given is that of a very aged and poor couple on whose humble home there was a small mortgage which became the burden of their old age, and which they had no hope of being able to discharge. Some generous boys found out the situation and quietly set about to save and make money enough to pay off the mortgage. This they accomplished within a few months, and thus brought permanent peace of mind to these aged and worthy people. While cases like these are somewhat out of the ordinary, there is in almost every community some work similar in general character which needs to be done, and in the doing of which the children and young people will be ennobled and enlarged.

5. Children should be trained to worship. The foundation of all true worship is, of course, a genuine reverence for God. Worship to be acceptable must be offered in spirit and in truth. It is thus a matter of the spirit and the mind, and can never consist in mere forms of any kind, however well conceived and elaborate. And yet a certain kind of instruction and a certain use of

forms are necessary to the training of children and young people in this kind of divine service. While forms are the mere fashion of worship, they greatly assist in the expression of worshipful moods and sentiments, and hence minister to the inculcation of the more essential elements of acceptable and edifying worship. Children are led to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the nature of reverence for God by being taught a proper reverence for the things which are necessarily related to his worship. These related elements consist chiefly of the house of God, the word of God, the ministry (which should certainly embrace the superintendent and teacher), and the forms of the common service.

The training children have in regard to the place and associations of the Sunday-school work has much to do in determining their feeling toward the regular church worship. If they are practically taught that the Sunday-school place and order are chiefly of a social nature, and that that element is almost or wholly lacking in the more formal services of the church, to go from

one to the other will be to pass into a wholly different atmosphere, one with a chill upon it. While the Sunday-school order should be duly, even delightfully social, and in the right sense natural, it ought to be throughout, and especially in its acts of devotion, deeply reverential. In this way the use of the order of worship in the Sunday school will prepare the pupil for passing into the more formal order of the church service without feeling a shock in the transition. The real object of the Sunday school on its devotional side is to lead up to and into a hearty and intelligent participation in the congregational worship.

All children should be taught a proper reverence for the word of God as the chief instrument in the revelation of the will of God to men. This does not, of course, mean that they should be filled with any merely superstitious regard for the Book as such. To make a fetich of it would be to destroy the very aim for which it was given; but a due regard for the sacredness of its contents, and a high sense of the uses to which they are to be applied, are a necessity of genuine and intelli-

gent religion. It not infrequently happens that children and young people are led to indulge, sometimes by example, in a light, flimsy, and even sacrilegious use of sacred texts. Especially is this liable to occur in efforts to be smart, both in the social circles and Sunday-school classes. This misuse of the word of God has become so largely a popular order as to demand serious correction through the preventive agency of the Sunday-school teacher and superintendent. Nothing will go further toward effecting this correction and preventing further spread of the habit than the reverent use of the Bible in the Sunday-school services and the right instruction of the children and young people in regard to it.

Reverence for the ministry in the broader sense in which I have already used the term is of the utmost importance. Indeed, reverence on the part of children and young people for their seniors and superiors, especially where it has large reference to spiritual excellencies, is very close akin to worship. He who has lack of reverence for men, especially of those of the highest

mold, is liable in the last analysis to be found lacking in reverence for God. Whoever destroys in himself and others a reverence for goodness and greatness in men is deliberately sawing from above his own head the rounds of the ladder by which, if at all, he must rise to higher things and lead others thither. All criticism of the ministry should be carefully avoided in the presence of. children in the home and in the Sunday school, They will readily catch the spirit while oftentimes missing the sense of the criticism, if indeed there be any sense in it. The man who does not profoundly reverence the office of the ministry, even though its incumbent be clothed in infirmities, is lacking in that spiritual sense, and even that common sense, necessary to the leadership of the young. Ministers come and go, but the office of the ministry abides. Children and young people fail to discriminate at this point, and hence strictures which are intended to apply only to the preacher as the temporary element they attach to the office, which is permanent. It is easy to see, therefore, that they are injured at a vital point

in their religious life by the reckless talk too often heard in home, Sunday-school, and church circles.

One of the chief elements in the worship of children and young people is that of praise, which expresses itself in song. There is no better way of teaching even the theological truths of Christianity, certainly no better way for impressing its noblest sentiments, than is found in the songs of the church and Sunday school. It will be found valuable, therefore, to require all the grades of pupils to memorize a considerable number of the best songs in proper variety, so that in their worship they shall sing them from memory, and shall thus have them present in mind and in heart in all the experiences of life. Whoever leads a child thoroughly to commit to memory a first-class hymn confers a lifelong benefit. There has been of late years much improvement in the character of the songs used in the Sunday schools. There is room for much more. Indeed, the times demand the creation of an interdenominational commission on Sunday-school hymnology for the purpose of selecting from the whole realm of church

songs, and especially of Sunday-school songs, those which are best adapted to childhood and youth, in order that all of the Sunday schools may be furnished with a great body of well-adapted, vital Sunday-school hymnology, corresponding, according to the purpose of it, with the present hymnology of the various Churches. This collection should, of course, exclude all mere trashy adventures at rhyming and music writing, and should include those songs and tunes which have already stood the test of religious need and refined taste, and have thus won their right to a place among the permanent songs of the Church. This would not prevent the ready inclusion hereafter of any thoroughly good hymns as they might be produced. With such a body of hymnology, the Sunday school would be prepared for a most edifying worship through its services of song, and one which, as has already been said, appeals especially to the young life of the world. It should further be provided, in as far as possible, that the children and youth of every Sunday school shall have proper training in the art of singing, embrac-

ing at least such elementary instruction and practice as will enable them to sing readily and correctly by note. Probably no better expenditure could be made by any school which has at all the ability to do so than in the employment of competent trainers of this kind. The worship in the Sunday school, begun and conducted under this thoroughgoing and rational order in regard to singing, would lead more easily and generally than anything else to the participation of our children and young people in the services of the general congregation. This becomes evident when we consider the fact that when there is in these general services an interesting and edifying part, in which they are prepared to engage with interest and pleasure, they will under the natural impulsions of youth desire to be present and take their part. Song is naturally the youth element in religious worship. Old people, as a rule, cannot sing. Young people, as a rule, cannot but sing. And when the youth of the Church have been well trained in the Sunday school in this order of worship, they will furnish to the congregational

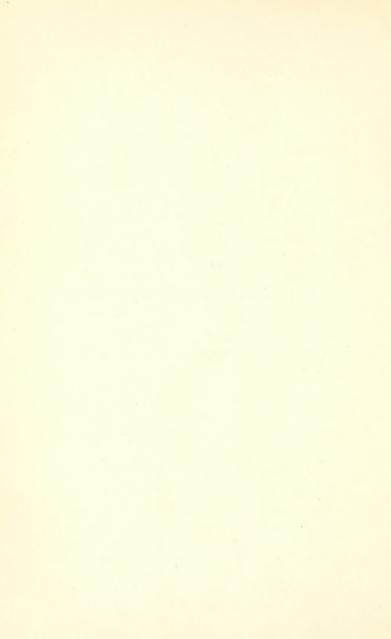
assembly an element of interest and attractiveness in the way of congregational singing which is now very much lacking. I trust that in this suggestion there may be found something which will help in solving the problem of the attendance of children and young people upon the public services of the Church.

In the development of the spirit and habit of worship children need to be taught a proper regard for the Church as an institution, and a right loyalty to it. This can be easily done at the first by very simple instruction as to the historic establishment of the Church and its purpose and field of work. A little later it may perhaps be best done by an approach from the denominational side. This aspect of the Church has life and relations in it, and can easily be made a most interesting and instructive study. There is a considerable tendency in this day to discount denominationalism as tending to narrowness, and therefore to a limitation of spiritual life and work. An effort at this kind of broadness is usually disastrous. There is a broadness which comes by

growth and is wholly admirable. There is another kind which comes by simple extension of the same substance. This kind always gains extension at the cost of intention. In plain words, broadness means a corresponding thinness. It is to be feared that indifference to a right denominationalism is of this kind. When a man seriously avers that one place or locality is as dear to him as another, he raises the suspicion that his patriotism is the patriotism of the tramp. So when the churchman of any name or order holds that one denomination is as good for him as another, he exhibits a type of loyalty that rises no higher. Denominationalism under its present order, while not yet wholly freed from undesirable features, is still nothing more than a regimentation of the Church of God for the more convenient and efficient achievement of the divine will in the salvation of the world.

On the other hand, it must be carefully noted that there is always danger of an overgrowth of the purely denominational idea in the average mind. Much harm in the way of limitation has resulted from this tendency. An overgrowth of the sectarian sense tends to produce the ecclesiastical Philistine rather than the truly aggressive and cosmopolitan Christian. Such a consummation of denominationalism is to be devoutly forestalled in the name and spirit of Him who said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

XIII. RELIGION IN POPULAR EDUCATION.



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RELIGION IN POPULAR EDUCATION.

THE relation between the home, the Bible school, and the day school is such that the aim proposed by the first two cannot be fully accomplished without the reënforcement in religious training which the day school is eminently fitted to furnish. The time has come for a very thorough reconsideration of the whole question of moral and religious instruction in the public schools of the nation. It is hoped that at least a brief statement on this subject may prove of some interest and value.

The doctrine of the organic union of the Church and the State is a decadent notion, and seems to be doomed to extinction. The experiment has worked disastrously,—sometimes to the Church, sometimes to the State, sometimes to both. So much is this the case that when the slow dissolution of this relation which is now

going on is complete, the probability is that the relation will never be renewed.

Nevertheless there is, and in the nature of the case must ever be, an essential unity of the Church and the State which cannot be overlooked or disregarded without great detriment to both. thinking the Church and the State apart, men usually think them further apart than they really are, or can be. This becomes clear on a little examination into the elements and interests which are common to both. The citizenship in both is largely identical. The same is, therefore, true of the resources of both. It not infrequently happens, and that in a perfectly normal order, that the officers set to rule in the State are members of the Church, if not officers in it. The moral ends contemplated by both are also much the same. The legislation of the State and its organization for executing the laws are very much the same as the Church would direct if these functions lay within its prerogatives. A very large part of the State legislation is aimed at securing those moral conditions in the conduct of

men for which the Church also labors. It is true that the State seeks these ends in a different way and with a somewhat different motive, but it obtains in a large measure the same practical results. When there are well-grounded complaints of corruption in the State, it is always a grief to the discerning churchman both on account of the fact and the cause of the fact. Thoughtful men know that no permanent corruption of the State is possible except by the corruption of its citizenship; and they know also that for any general corruption of the citizens the Church has a large share of responsibility, not of course as having any agency in bringing it about, but for allowing it. The Church is the divinely appointed guardian of the moral and spiritual life of the people, and has now in all civilized lands an open field for every kind of work necessary to secure the ends for which it exists. The statehood element in every civilization is the reflected light of the religion of the commonwealth. To speak at once both figuratively and accurately, the State is the mere moonshine of the Church in every Christian

civilization, and of religion of some sort in all others.

But despite these numerous inherent elements of unity, there is one point of variance, if not of antagonism, between the Church and the State which demands the best attention of our statesmen, both civic and ecclesiastical. This antagonism is not essential: it is indeed abnormal, but it is truly serious. I refer to the question of religious instruction within the educational domain occupied by the State. There are in this case, as in all cases of serious controversy, extremists on both sides, who while they may make valuable contributions to the solution of the problem will probably never see it solved in full agreement with the views of either.

There are those on the part of the Church who hold that the State has no inherent right to do any educational work whatever except it be a limited amount of purely economic or technological training. They hold that the educational function is in the nature of the case paternal and ecclesiastical. This position contains much truth,

but it possibly contains a fallacy also, growing out of a failure to regard those elements of essential unity of Church and State which have already been mentioned. The fact that the citizenship, resources, aims, and even the officiary of the Church and State are so largely identical, gives to the Church, not as an organization but as a dominant influence, the opportunity of doing through the State a vast amount of valuable educational work which, for lack of civic authority and the direct command of the popular resources, it is itself not in a situation to do. This does not mean that the Church should surrender or modify its claim of the right to furnish adequate religious instruction to all the citizens of the commonwealth through all the channels of popular education. It does mean, however, that the Church should not fight for a position of victorious antagonism, but rather for one of gracious, triumphant, dominant influence in all matters affecting the religious and moral welfare of the commonwealth.

There are those of the State, on the other hand,

who hold that popular education does not lie within the province of the Church; that the Church's resources are not adequate, and that its organization is not adapted to this end; and that the end of popular education is the production of a competent citizenship, which makes it purely a concern of the State. There is in this position some truth, the recognition of which fact is compelled by the candor of righteousness. But there is also in it a vast amount of error, which has already brought disastrous results, and which is destined to bring forth much more of the same kind if allowed to grow till it gain final ascendency in our national thought.

In quite a number of the states a most unfortunate and damaging antagonism between the so-called state schools and those of other classifications has been produced by lack of wisdom in estimating and relating the diversified work of all the schools within the commonwealth. Such antagonisms need not exist, and under wisest counsels could not exist. There are in every state in

the Union two general classes of schools; those that are fostered by the state in the sense of being supported through public taxation; and those which have been founded and are conducted by churches, or corporations, or individuals. These latter classes not only did the pioneer work in our educational history, but they are doing now, to say the least of it, as high an order of work as are the schools of the former class. These schools, in doing thoroughly the work of educating and training the children and youth of the commonwealth for all the functions of a high and effective citizenship, are serving the state as truly and as valuably as are the institutions which are called state schools for the reason mentioned above. The one difference is that they do their work without the least cost to the state as such. In view of the large identity of aim in the existence of both classes of schools, there are no essential elements of antagonism, and those which are fictitious or incidental ought to be removed. Such an adjustment of both classes to the one great end to be achieved by both as will make them generally coöperative is altogether possible and much to be desired.

But all mere incidents aside, the assumption that a worthy, happy, virtuous, and reliable citizenship can be produced by any system of merely secular education—that is, one from which the development of man's religious nature has been excluded—is utterly erroneous and hurtful. Indeed, the leading psychologists and educators of our time, in so far as they have spoken on this point, are practically unanimous in the position that the primary end of education is not knowing, but being; not the mere attainment of knowledge and intellectual development, but the production of the highest character. Some of them go so far as to say on purely psychological grounds that no man can be regarded as an educated man without the development of his religious nature. statements of a few of these as cited by Dr. Coe will make this clear.

J. P. Monroe says: "The question to be asked at the end of an educational step is not 'What has the child learned?' but, 'What has the child become?" Professor William James says: "Education cannot be better described than by calling it the organization of acquired habits of conduct and the tendencies to behavior." Herbert Spencer: "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge." H. H. Horne, in his "Philosophy of Education," says: "Education is the eternal process of the superior adjustment of the physically and mentally developed, free, conscious human being to God, as manifested in the intellectual, emotional, and volitional environment of man." Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler says, "Education is a gradual adjustment to the spiritual possessions of the race"; and in the further discussion he places the religious inheritance as one of the five to which every child is entitled.

Not only is the view that the development of man's religious nature is necessary in order to a complete education for the social and civic ends of human life well established in the educational philosophy of the day, but the leading workers in the sphere of public or secular education are speaking the same things out of their experiences with the masses. Some of them are freely confessing that the experiment of divorcing popular education from religion is working disastrously, and that without the means and opportunities for the religious development of the pupils the work which they are doing is falling far short of achieving as its end the best citizenship—the very end at which the public school system is confessedly aimed.

If it be said that while religious education is wholesome, and even necessary to the making of the desirable citizen, the home and Bible school are the places for it, and not the state school, there are two sufficient answers at hand. The first of these is, that even though this work may be having due attention in the home and the Bible school, it needs to be supplemented by similar work in the day school. The process of education is not, as is usually said, a mere preparation for life; it is actual living, and there is no place where there is a more vital need of religion as the inspiration of all reliable morality than in the de-

veloping stages of real life, when children and young people are coming into a realization and use of those relations which stand outside the home and connect them with the larger community. It must also be noted that a failure to inculcate or even to recognize religion in the public schools has a direct tendency to contradict the impressions made in its favor by the home. The child in passing into new hands for guidance and into other new relations, and finding that religion is ignored, is impressed that it is only a matter of the narrower circle of the home, and is thus injured in his estimate of religion as a fact and force in all the relations of society. The second answer is, that a vast number, perhaps a majority, of pupils have no religious instruction in the home, and must either receive it through the public schools, or be trained up as wholly irreligious citizens. That element alone furnishes an unanswerable plea for the presence of religious instruction in every grade of public schools.

As to the mere reading of the Bible in the opening exercises of the public schools, there is

much more liberty in this than is commonly known, and very much more, I fear, than is generally used. The facts in the case as set forth in the statutory laws of the state, or as determined by attorneys general or superintendents of public instruction, are as follows: There are eleven states in which the reading of the Bible is required by law. There are only two states in which it is clearly prohibited. In thirty-eight of the states the Bible is read in nearly all of the schools, and there are only seven in which it is not read. It is read in all the schools of the District of Columbia under a law of the School Board.

It is easy to see from this record that in all the states but two the religious patrons of the schools and the managing committees have it within their power to make much of the opportunity thus offered for the reading of the Bible daily in the hearing of the pupils. This much reverently and appreciatively done is calculated to wield a large influence in behalf of religion and morality.

This of itself, however, is not sufficient to meet

the demand for the training of the pupils in morals and religion. As has already been said, there is need for a well-ordered course of religious instruction, one which shall be as thoroughly studied and as completely mastered as any other course in the school. It does not need to be heavy in volume, but it does need to be selected and taught in harmony with the same laws of pedagogy which prevail in the choice and execution of all other courses within the school. It is needless to say that the Bible itself should constitute the major part of this course. As mere literature there is nothing comparable to it, whether the realm be that of stories, biography, history, poetry, philosophy, or ethics. But to study it only as literature is not sufficient, though incidentally of very great value. The supreme object of this study should be the establishment of the pupils in a truly moral and religious character, fitting them for the discharge of the duties of all life's relations from the standpoint of the Bible. The teaching of the Bible as mere literature, however ably done, can never accomplish the ends

aimed at in religious instruction. In order to this, the divine imperative must be recognized and felt. It is as the word of God, and not merely as a great book, that the Bible must be handled if its spiritual force is to be fully realized.

If it be said that such an adjustment is morally and otherwise a difficult undertaking, I should venture the reply that it is not so difficult as many imagine, and that moreover it is worth any amount of labor and cost. It is altogether possible for a council of religious representatives in each state to prepare in harmony with the religious demands of the commonwealth a course of instruction embracing all that is essential to a high moral and religious character, and to do this in such wise as to leave no room for sectarian influences, and no ground for objection on the part of any who, all religious notions aside, desire the best welfare of the citizens of the state. Experiments of this kind have been made on a small scale, and have proved the plan successful. It has thus been demonstrated that it is not really difficult to produce a course which will not prove

objectionable to even the narrowest sectarians, at least after they have had opportunity to see the benefits which accrue to all pupils alike. Something of this kind will of necessity come about. The notion that men can be prepared for bearing the burdens and peculiar temptations incident to the life of a great republic in which the character of the citizen is the only security of the government, without adequate moral and religious instruction and training in the years of mental development, is too visibly false to require serious contradiction.

There is reason to believe that the present insufficient order in the matter of religious teaching in the schools of the state is largely due to indifference on the part of the Churches; or at least to a failure to make that concerted action necessary to the procurement of a larger and better furnishing of the pupils with the truths and inspirations of religion. As an indication of the readiness of the people to receive at least some amount of religious instruction, I beg to cite a statement from the forty-ninth report of

the superintendent of public instruction for the state of New York. Let it be noted that the most mixed or cosmopolitan citizenship in the United States is probably that of the city of New York. Superintendent Skinner says: "During the seventeen years that I have been connected with the department, I have never known of an appeal or protest from an inhabitant of the city of New York with reference to reading the Bible in the schools of that city, although it has been daily read in every one therein during all that period." Half the children of school age in the state live within the city of New York.

The National Educational Association, one of the most influential educational organizations in the United States, and yet not a religious body, in its annual report for 1902 says: "We regard true education as inseparable from morality, and believe that the public school is the recognized agency to make this relation binding. We urge public school authorities of the country, teachers and parents, to give strict attention to moral instruction in our schools as the true foundation of

character and citizenship. Every consideration of good policy and healthful social conditions points to the necessity of such instruction; the testimony of educational leaders justifies it, and an overwhelming public opinion demands it. We plead not for sectarian training of any kind, but for that moral instruction which must underlie true life and character." In speaking further of the use of the Bible in the public schools, the Association says: "We do not urge this in the interest of sectarian instruction of any kind, but that this great book may ever be the teacher's aid in the interpretation of history and literature, law and life—an unrivaled agency in the development of true citizenship, as well as in the formation of pure literary style."

A broad and thoroughgoing movement on the part of the religious elements in each of the several states, in behalf of a suitable course of religious instruction, would doubtless in most cases find a ready and generous response on the part of the legislatures in control. It would be needful, of course, that it should be apparent from

the start that all sectarian advancement had been laid aside, and that the movement itself was an adjustment of all the denominations to the single end of a fuller and more effective order of religious instruction. A patriotic movement of this kind, from the standpoint of a pure and unselfish regard for the moral welfare of the whole people, could not but command the respect and sympathy of the citizens at large.

With a suitable course of religious instruction in the public schools, we should have, with the home and Sunday school, such an organization or coördination of religious forces as is called for by the nature of the Christian religion and by the genius of our people and our form of government. The thorough coöperation of these three institutions, each in accord with its peculiar nature and with its place in the social fabric, would produce a citizenship in whose keeping the sacred interests of the Church, the home, and the state would be perpetually safe.

While we await, and work for, the coming of the better order which has been mentioned above, there are two things which the religious people of every commonwealth can do with very large profit to all the children and young people under instruction. The first of these is, to use all proper means to provide that the education of the children shall be committed only to teachers of high personal character, who both by the example of their lives and the moral tone of their teaching shall guide the children into right views of character and of life. The Bible embodied in the character of the teacher is one of its most effective forms for the achievement of all the moral and religious ends at which it aims. The second thing is, to see that the religious order now provided for by the state, or allowed, shall be so used as to bring about the largest amount and best quality of religious instruction of which it admits.



XIV.

THE CHURCH THROUGH ALL.

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XIV.

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"A GENERAL return to the Christianity of Christ," says Professor Bruce, "would have a most important effect upon the religious training of the young. At present, it is to be feared, this department of the Church's work suffers greatly from our being in a transition time."

The trouble is really a more radical one than that involved in any mere transition of the Church from one state to another. It lies, as has already been shown, in a failure of the Church to hold steadfastly to its main function, which is one of training. Dogmatism is good enough in its place—and it has a place of importance—but it cannot make habit, character, life. These are the products of training only; and just as they are in reality the chief ends aimed at by the Church's existence, training is rationally the only method of dealing adequately with the young.

^{1 &}quot;The Kingdom of God," page 350.

I have endeavored to show that the Church by properly directing its included institutions, the home and the Sunday school, and the related institution now known as public education, can accomplish in a more successful way than has yet been done, the vast work committed to it by its divine Master. This does not, however, imply that the home and the Sunday school, even if properly used, are the whole of the Church. They are the means for the production of a properly equipped Church which has its distinct functions to perform, and without the performance of which the work of Christ for the saving of man cannot be accomplished.

A full recognition on the part of the Church that its chief function is to train the young will lead to two steps in particular which are of the utmost importance. One of these is the creation of an order of architecture demanded by the training idea; and the other is a better use of the pulpit for the achievement of educational results.

Every person of experience knows how vitally the comfort and well-being of a family are af-

fected by the family domicile. The home, in the sense of the house inhabited, has very much to do with questions of intellectual and moral growth as well as of physical health and comfort. No more important subject can engage the thought of men on the material side of human life. The same is true in a corresponding measure of the Church home. And yet no interest has been more neglected. We have been content to waste vast sums of money on exterior and nonessential conditions to the neglect of interior arrangements which are utterly necessary if the training notion is to be carried out. It is true that with the growth of interest in child life on its religious side, there has come a most encouraging improvement in church building. But the present status shows how desultory has been this growth and how still partial it is. What is demanded is a thoroughgoing reorganization of church architecture and the exclusive use of a kind fully adapted to the training of the young through all the grades of development. If the Church is to be indeed a school of Christ, the

church edifice ought to be a schoolhouse of religion; and if the training which the Church imparts is to extend to all the branches of religious activity demanded by the complex social order of the times, there must be a corresponding equipment in the places and appointments of training. It is easy to see that nothing which the Church could do would be more effectual in teaching the public that the primary aim of the Church is the religious education of the young, than to change its architecture so as to adapt it to that end. Many changes are being made in that direction, and most of the new houses are being built with at least some reference to the existence of children and their rights and needs in relation to the kingdom of God. These movements are in the main merely of individual congregations, and are subject to all the incidents of ignorance and incompetent local leadership. Instead of this, a denominational order at least should prevail; that is, each denomination might have a competent commission to determine what is the best order of house for the work of the

Church, due regard being had for the various costs to be undergone. At the very least, no Church Extension Board or Society should keep on hand or furnish any plan which does not make proper provision for the children of the Church. Even a small chapel, so plain as to cost no more than five hundred dollars, may be so constructed as to have one part which can be shut off from the main room for the use of the primary department in Sunday-school work. On account of the lack of such assistance and direction, there are now hundreds, perhaps thousands, of communities which are building, or have just finished, houses that with the progress of the new thought will within a decade be so unsuited to what will then be the most cherished work of the congregation that they will be changed or rebuilt at large cost. The communion which does not have regard henceforth for the religious education of its children is doomed to become very soon a decadent Church; and the church building which is not constructed with large reference to this end will in a short time be a superannuated structure.

But there is another function, belonging to the Church and touching this matter, which stands far above all outward appointments, however important they may be in their place. I refer to the teaching order of the pulpit itself. The pulpit has been and is still regarded as in some vital respects the very top and forefront of the Church. It holds the words of eternal life. It determines the drift of Christian thinking and experience. It has much to do, therefore, in regulating the ethical views of the individual and the community. This is an exceedingly important office, and must ever remain so. The value of the pulpit in serving the public in this way can, indeed, scarcely be overestimated. But all this can be better done, and at the same time include other ends which are fully as important, by beginning further back, and by the use of a somewhat different method. The pulpit needs to be made the chief teaching function of the Church. It must, of course, retain other functions; but this should be made the foremost, and should at least give type and direction to all that lies beneath. In order to meet

adequately the demands of the hour, the desultory elements need to be eliminated and a more systematic order adopted. Every congregation has the right to expect that a definite plan shall be used for the instruction, inspiration, and guidance of the people. No preacher can afford to fall short of such an ideal for himself as the leader of all the educational and inspirational forces of the Church of Christ. This implies, of course, that an order which is more truly pedagogical in its character shall rest at the bottom of the preacher's plan of service. The plan of work on the part of every Christian pulpit should be as genuinely educational and as thoroughly systematized as is that of any college department or university chair. This is necessary in order to the greatest personal efficiency on the part of the pastor, in both the doing of his own work as a preacher and in leading the Church successfully in the doing of its work. There is perhaps no deeper utterance in the Old Testament than that the people perish for lack of knowledge. This demand for instruction from the pulpit can

no more be met by the desultory order so often pursued than an occasional Nero's feast could supply the demand of the people for daily bread. The true aim of the pulpit is to build men up in the faith and knowledge of God; and the preacher, to fulfill the divine purpose, must be in the truest sense a teacher in all holy things. It is scarcely to be doubted that the day of the greatest preaching is in the future rather than in the past, but on an order of demand which shall differ widely from that which has heretofore determined so largely the policy of the pulpit.

This brings forward the suggestion that the pursuance on the part of the Church of the educational process of which I have been speaking will go very far toward determining the themes of the pulpit. It has always been true that those preachers who have recognized that the deepest and most abiding interest of men roots itself in the common relations of life, and have conducted their ministry on this notion, have taken the strongest and most permanent hold upon the confidence and esteem of their hearers. This will

be even more so under a more thoroughly educational order. This change will have a dispiriting effect upon the makers and lovers of big sermons, on sporadic themes according to the status or drift of popular interest, but it will work a corresponding change in the quality of our preaching for edifying those who hear. As has already been said, there are no themes which in themselves interest men more than those pertaining to the common relations of life; and when these are dealt with discerningly, and with due delicacy and sympathy, they furnish endless entertainment as well as edification.

This educational order demands that the pulpit shall deal plainly and adequately with such themes as marriage; the family; the responsibilities, opportunities, and duties of parents; the obligations and duties of children; the relations of individuals and of the family to society; the duties of society, especially in its civic forms, to individuals and to the family. More than one of these general themes will easily include such subjects as the value of the child; the right of every

person to the development of the faculties with which he is endowed; hence the subject of Christian education in its various forms, whether conducted by the Church directly or indirectly through the State. There is also here the necessary inclusion of various sociological and civic questions as immediately related to the religious and social welfare of men. The treatment of such subjects in their right relations will free them from that objectionable and injurious sensationalism which so often characterizes the discussions of them in the present day. Moreover, the home and earlier Church life of the people is the sphere in which to settle most, if not all, of the perplexing questions of social and civic life. It follows hence that the pulpit, by the right direction of all the forces within the Church, may not only become of controlling influence when it speaks in such matters, but may have many of them so clearly settled in advance as to prevent their becoming disturbing issues. Temperance, for example, is in almost every community both a social and a civic issue. A brilliant fulmination

now and then before audiences of adult people doubtless does some good; but the systematic instruction of one generation of children is at last the only hope for a temperate population, whose social customs and civil provisions shall at once reflect and reënforce the teachings and habits of the home and the school.

The glow of one of our Saviour's profoundest utterances falls constantly upon this whole field, namely this, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation, or order of things, than the children of light. The general meaning is, that the children of this world adapt the means to the ends. They proceed more in accordance with the laws prevailing in the realms where they work. They are, in other words, more rational and scientific in their search for results. They do not hope to obtain invariable and universal results from desultory methods, or have permanent effects from intermittent forces. If the methods commonly adopted by the Church were to be used in the world of commerce they would bring universal bankruptcy; and if in the sphere of statesmanship, the nations would become involved in hopeless and deadly entanglements.

The greatest economic demand of the hour is for a Church statesmanship broad enough to embrace all the interests of humanity within its sympathies, and wise enough to construct plans of movement which shall direct all our activities in harmony with those laws of life and growth by which alone the kingdom of God among men can become universal and complete. Jesus has given us both this inspiration and a general plan. has taught us with indubitable plainness through two dispensations that he has a kingdom in the cradle; that the chief work of the Church is to lay hold of this cradled host, keep it within the kingdom, and conduct its development in harmony with the plainly written laws of life and growth, till it reaches a perfected manhood. This order, which God has clearly prescribed in both the man and the book, cannot fail of those general results called for by the law of the harvest, whether the circle be that of the individual, the family, the community, or the race. It is true that cases of

blight now occur in the midst of the most fruitful fields, and may continue to do so until the end. It is also true that the blight comes about by a law which, while very occult, is as truly a law as is that by which the golden grain comes to the harvest. But as no sane mind would discredit the method of seed sowing and proper cultivation as a means of obtaining a crop because of the occurrence of a few ears of blight or blast within the well-tilled field, so the failure of the educational process to bring forth invariably the results desired does not stand against the plan.

I have said that the period of greatest preaching is in the future rather than in the past. This is almost, but not wholly, equal to saying that the period of greatest influence and power on the part of the preacher himself, in his relations with the community, is in the future rather than in the past. Under the order about which this volume is conversant, the deepened and widened field of the ministry will call for a larger leadership, and the ministry will adequately respond. The world will be quick to recognize this enlarged and

vitalized service of the preacher, and to respond to it by giving him his proper place at the head of human agencies for the good of man in every sphere of interest. This will have its due influence in determining the class of men to occupy this exalted place, and the equipment which they are to have for their sacred and useful office. When it comes to be recognized that the work of the ministry is indeed the highest class of educational work; that it lays its hand upon the very sources of life, and thereby determines not only its religious but its social and civic direction; that the preacher is in fact a kingdom builder in the truest sense, the ministry will have charms for young men of the highest order of ability, the largest attainments, and the most influential estates, which in many periods of the Church's history it has not had. This does not discount the call to the ministry, but looks only in the direction of the many who are called, but who, in the din of the world's clamor for men, do not hear or heed the call. This order will also develop a lay ministry of the most valuable class.

Laymen of the largest endowments, scholarship, and consecration will then be able to enter the work of the Church without ordination to any exclusive ministry of the word, but with such breadth and heartiness as will make their work in substance wholly one with that of their brethren who are in orders.

In the course of this discussion we have seen that the kingdom of heaven is to be commensurate with the race; that it is to come about through a process of growth which is chiefly from within; that the ultimate prevalence of this kingdom is assured by the outgrowing power of Christianity as compared with all other systems of faith; that for the best results from this principle of growth the religious culture of men must be begun in very early life; that for the achievement of this purpose the atmospheres, and later the instruction and training, of the home are the chief agencies; that in the later work of training, the Sunday school and even the day school play a very important part, and that the rationale of all these educational agencies and processes lies far back of them and is found in a unique doctrine of our Lord. That doctrine is that he has already a kingdom in the cradle, and along with it is the closely related doctrine that the chief work of the Church in obeying his command to disciple the nations is to so train these constituents of the kingdom that they shall come to maturity, not as the result of accidental movements, but under the operation of laws which are normal and universal.

In saying that these laws of religious growth are universal I do not mean to say that they are as to results unexceptional; for while the law of growth as from seed is the uniform doctrine touching the expansion or development of the kingdom both in the individual believer and in the community life of men, there is another law, the law of free agency, which cannot be contravened. It is not held that any amount of training can or shall take from men the ability and responsibility of free and persistent choice. Men well trained in the elements of a religious life can and sometimes do choose and follow a

life of sin. Others, despite much ignorance and positive misguidance, do choose to follow the good. But these cases are exceptional in both directions. The law mentioned really obtains with remarkable uniformity. It cannot but be true in religion, as in other things, that men attain easiest and most surely to that toward which they are trained from infancy.

The establishment of holy prejudices in children is one of the highest duties of parents and of the Church. It is a debt which both owe to the young; the rightful heritage of children out of the experience and wisdom of their predecessors, vastly more valuable than those perishable inheritances on which so much of care is bestowed. Under proper conditions this course involves none of that dreaded narrowness of which so much talk is heard in these times, nor does it imply any undesirable limitations upon individualism. It is indeed the plain way to the largest freedom in after life, and to a broadness which is not purchased at the price of shallowness.

It is granted that the doctrine of the kingdom in the cradle involves conclusions of large and even revolutionary import. Some of these are theological, some philosophic, but in the main they are economic; that is, they pertain to methods of movement on the part of the Church for the achievement of the practical ends for which it exists. The Church is, for example, justly busied with such questions as temperance, social purity, commercial integrity, civic righteousness, and philanthropic sociology in its varied forms. But these great questions which cover so large a part of man's life cannot be settled by being treated in the abstract, nor by even the most powerful appeals to grown-up populations who are already under the domination of self-interest of the lower sort, and have become fully established in the forms of sin which the Church thus seeks to resist. Sermons full of great, convincing, courageous utterances do affect the ethical tone of communities, and save some individuals from these evils, but they do not save society. All these problems come afresh to the altar of their only available solution when with each year nearly fifty millions of children are born into the world. In that direction alone lies the hope of a saved society, a regenerated race. The largest economic question in the modern Church has been and still is: How shall we reach the masses? The true answer is: Reach them in the cradle, or you shall not reach them at all.

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